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TO
CHINESE ART
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CHINESE ART. 9649

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Portrait of the first Sung Emperor T'ai Tsu
(Reigned A.D. 960-975)
Painting in colour on silk, by an unidentified
artist of the Sung Period. Reproduced by the
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D. 76.

INTRODUCTION TO
CHINESE ART
AND HISTORY

BY
ARNOLD SILCOCK



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To
LAURENCE BINYON



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

In 1921 Mr. Laurence Binyon fired me with his own enthusiasm for the art of China, and it was largely as a result of my talks with him that I ultimately spent several happy years in that country. Since then Mr. Binyon's example and his writings and lectures on Chinese painting have been perennial sources of inspiration, and I owe him a debt of gratitude which I can never repay. Indeed, the completion of this book has been made possible by help and encouragement from friends too numerous for individual mention here, although I have already tried to express my thanks to them personally.

I am especially grateful to Mr. Bernard Rackham, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, who has read the book in proof and has given invaluable advice and constant help both directly and through his own writings. I am deeply indebted also to Mr. L. C. Hopkins for his great kindness in reading the proofs and for much good counsel. Mr. Basil Gray, of the British Museum, generously helped me in the same way, and Mr. C. J. Gadd of the British Museum kindly spent some time in checking the first pages of the chronological tables in the appendix.

To Dr. W. G. Constable, Director of the Courtauld Institute of Fine Art, I also owe much, for during our

Preface to the Second Edition

brief association at two of the great Winter Exhibitions at the Rôyal Academy I learnt to admire his personal qualities and his methods of work, and since that time I have been one of the many who have enjoyed the benefits of his administration at the Courtauld Institute. At the Institute I acquired useful knowledge and I was given a great deal of assistance with references to little known sources of information, with photographs, with drawings and in many other ways by Professor Yetts and others of the teaching staff and students. I wish here to record my lively sense of gratitude to them.

No record of thanks would be complete without an expression of the admiration and gratitude which all lovers of Chinese art owe to Mr. George Eumorfopoulos. My debt is a great one, not only because I have so often accepted his open invitation to visit his magnificent collection, but also because this collection has supplied many of my finest illustrations.

Mr. S. I. Hsiung, the author of *Lady Precious Stream*, and Mr. Chiang Yee, of the School of Oriental Studies, are owed a special word of thanks for their notes on Chinese literature, painting and history. Mr. O. H. Bedford, who has provided some delightful illustrations for this book, has kindly given me most welcome assistance in innumerable ways from its inception and has, in addition, assisted with maps.

There are many others whose works have been a constant source of enjoyment and knowledge. I owe much to the writings of Dr. J. Gunnar Andersson,

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especially his fascinating book *Children of the Yellow Earth* (Kegan Paul). But almost as great is my indebtedness to Mr. R. L. Hobson, of the British Museum, and to Mr. A. L. Hetherington, to the late Dr. Berthold Laufer, of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, U.S.A., to Sir Aurel Stein, Mr. Leigh Ashton, Dr. Osvald Sirén, Dr. Richard Wilhelm, and (for the use of photographs) to the Louvre and the Musée Guimet, Paris, to the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, to the City Museum, Birmingham, and to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, U.S.A. Special thanks for permission to reproduce the new colour plates are due to the Chinese Government, and to Dr. Cheng, the Special Commissioner of China for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. Also to Dr. Leonard Gow and to Mr. S. D. Winkworth. For permission to use photographs of objects in their collections I have also to thank the Baroness D'Erlanger and Mr. H. J. Oppenheim. My grateful acknowledgements are also due to the authors and publishers of the following books, from which I have quoted various poems and translations of passages in Chinese literature: *170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley, Constable & Co., Ltd.; *Chinese Art*, S. W. Bushell, Victoria and Albert Museum Handbook; *An Outline History of China*, Herbert H. Gowen, Sherman, French & Co. Besides these there are Dr. F. Hirth, Dr. A. H. Longhurst, and others whose works I have consulted with the very efficient and helpful co-

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operation of Mrs. Cardew, Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society.

But any merit this book may possess is chiefly due to the enthusiastic and untiring industry and counsel of my wife, and also of Miss Jane Oliver, both of whom have, from the beginning, shouldered all the thankless tasks which fall to the lot of kind but candid critics, experienced proof-readers, and sympathetic helpers.

I wish also to express my gratitude to the London headquarters of the Oxford University Press, and especially to my friend Mr. Gerard Hopkins. Their cordial backing and our very happy association during the past few months have done more than I can well express to make the speedy production of this book possible.

Finally I wish to record that this revised and expanded second edition, with additional colour plates and other new illustrations, a general reader's bibliography and a fuller index, has been produced in an extraordinarily short space of time chiefly through the tireless efforts of Mr. Richard de la Mare and the staff of Messrs. Faber and Faber, Ltd.: efforts made necessary when the first edition was exhausted in less than a month.

ARNOLD SILCOCK

London,

9th January, 1936.

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INTRODUCTION

Books about Chinese art are scarce, and those for the general reader who is interested in art are scarcer still. This one is literally an introduction to the subject: an attempt to provide a simple picture of the environment and the age-long development of a great people and a noble art.

I have tried to escape the dust-cloud of dull dates which is apt to stifle the interest in books of this kind. I have also tried to save the reader a fruitless tussle with tongue-twisting Chinese names, by omitting them as far as possible. Readers who are interested, however, will find at the end of the book a guide to the pronunciation of Chinese names, synoptic tables giving the dates of the important events and personalities in Chinese art and history with concurrent events in the rest of the world, and other tabulated information. They will also find, inside the book covers, a map of China in antiquity and a map showing the eighteen provinces of historical times, which form the end-papers.

Finally I would emphasize that my *Introduction to Chinese Art and History* is not written from the point of view of the expert, but of one who endeavours to touch and look upon beautiful Chinese things with the sympathy and appreciation which all great art should inspire.



I

THE BEGINNINGS

There is a temple in the western hills outside Peking. Over the quiet courtyard three ginkgo trees have spread lizard-grey branches and warmed their blue-green leaves for centuries in the sun. The priests attend upon them with special awe, for twice in a hundred years, they say, the sacred trees sprang fully grown into being as a great emperor appeared. *Beginnings*

This is the legend; but the true story of the ginkgo tree is stranger still. Though never seen in the wild state, from time immemorial it has been cultivated by the Chinese and planted about their temples. Thus nurtured it still survives, a living fossil from before the age of giant saurians, a hundred million years ago.

Though late in time compared with the ginkgo tree, the dinosaurs represent for us an age so remote in the earth's history that we never expect to see relics of it beyond the occasional fragments of fossilized bone dug up by archaeologists. Only in China have the eggs of these great reptiles been found, still lying intact under the warm sand of their primeval breeding grounds.

The myths and early writings have again and again proved to relate events, once considered ridiculous by western scholars, which later have been found

The Beginnings

curiously near the truth. One tells of the primordial egg, one of the origin of fossils, and the oldest legends recount stories of men descended from 'dragons'. There is a strange immutability, a deathless capacity for survival which appears typically and exclusively to belong to China. Recent archaeological discoveries have proved that, even in the field of art, forms have been transmitted almost unchanged from prehistoric times. Nothing occurring or invented there seems ever to be irrevocably lost.

A Chinese was among the first to discover the true significance of fossils. We point with pride to the many-faceted genius of Leonardo da Vinci—poet, painter, sculptor, engineer, and scientist, the first man in Europe to write a treatise in which the real nature of fossils is discussed. Yet over three hundred years earlier than da Vinci, Chu Hsi wrote:

'I have seen shells and mussels in the high mountains, some of them appearing in stones. This shows that the stones are primitive earth. Shells and mussels belong to water, so the low has been made high and the soft has been changed into hard.'¹

Small fossils of reptilian form, some coiled, some not, are to this day sought by the Chinese and, highly polished, are poised upon carved wooden stands and preserved in their collections of antiquities. Many of

¹See *Children of the Yellow Earth*, by J. G. Andersson, published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd. to whom I am greatly indebted for some of the information given in this chapter.

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these fossils belong to the family of Ammonites, and it would be interesting to know whether their form influenced the development of a very early coiled type of the dragon *motif* which later became such a universal feature in Chinese art. But it is far more likely that the dragon *motif* has other sources. Some archaeologists believe it to have been a large, migratory fish which, swimming up the rivers in the spring at a period coinciding with seed-time, gave rise to the later superstition that the coming of the 'dragons' through the waters showed that the propitious time for the sowing had arrived. The dragons are still associated with water and vapour. They are believed to live in the seas and rivers, to ascend into the clouds and to cause the falling of rain. Thus, probably in very early times they became symbols of fertility. The earliest known dragon types in decoration resemble fish or snakes, and the four-legged, clawed and horned creature was a later development. These distinctive features were acquired in a curious, piecemeal fashion, for there were legless and one-legged varieties which occurred in the interval before the four-legged monster appeared. The dragon, most typical of all the art *motifs* of China, proves to be also one of the most ancient. (See Fig. 5.)

The chronology given in the ancient Chinese accounts of prehistoric times may, of course, be disregarded; but queer coincidences can again and again be found in these fables.

The Beginnings

Fable, for instance, gives a series of mythical rulers and men ending with the 'nest-having' and the 'fire-makers'. Fact confirms fable with the following discoveries.

Though little is known about the man-like apes—offshoots of the main stem of hominidae from which man derives—yet there is no reason to doubt that they once also inhabited north-eastern Asia. And, as they were tree-dwellers, they were most probably 'nest-having'. Later in time appeared the first sub-man, *Pithecanthropus erectus*, which was found in Java. Of far greater importance than these was Professor Andersson's world famous discovery of a still later type, dating from the oldest Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) culture cycle—Peking Man. The first of the cave-men, he fashioned weapons and primitive rock implements, peered from under massive beetling brows and ambled with crouching gait to hunt the sabre-toothed tiger, the bear, and antelope which roamed the grassy steppes of Mongolia and northern China a million years ago. This sub-man was still without a chin, and in other ways also like a chimpanzee. But he was not an ape, for traces of ash and charcoal in his cave, besides adding to the evidence that he was a sub-man, show that he was a 'fire-maker'.

The boundaries of this favoured country of north-eastern Asia were already set. Mountain barriers, rivalling the Himalayas in loftiness and inaccessi-

The Beginnings

bility, drew a ring of almost impassable ramparts from the southernmost extremity at the coast, shutting off territories now called Siam and Burma, and on the west the vast plains of Tibet. Hills fringed the north and the ocean guarded the long eastern coast-line.

And still the gingko trees flourished.

There is little evidence to guide us as to the climate and the conditions of human life during the subsequent ice-ages, and down to approximately 4000 B.C., but they were probably undergoing cataclysmic changes.¹ Various theories on this subject have been put forward, the most imaginative, perhaps, being Richtofen's account of the coming of the loess. From his observation of those terrific 'sand-storms', which even to-day drive mercilessly through Peking, he formed the opinion that probably age-long dust storms brought to the North China plain that unforgettable, golden landscape—the loess or eolian deposit. It is difficult for the imagination to picture huge clouds of this powder-fine soil torn up from the heart of Asia and carried thousands of miles on the wind to be laid like a vast yellow carpet upon the sheltered expanse of the North China plain. Yet in this way these fields were made.

It is from the culture-layers hidden deep in the soft

¹The reader who requires further information is referred to the papers in the Bulletins and Memoirs of the National Geological Survey of China, and to the writings of Roy Chapman Andrews, J. G. Andersson, P. Teilhard and E. Licent, B. Karlgren and O. Karlbeck, and to *Palaeontologia Sinica*, etc.

The Beginnings

loess that evidence of China's Stone Age has chiefly come. Here again Dr. Andersson was the pioneer and his epoch-making discoveries are well-known.

From rather before and during the Palaeolithic age in north-eastern Asia date the earliest relics of prehistoric man in the West—first the Piltdown man of Sussex, then the discoveries in Europe of traces of the type known as the Heidelberg man, later, Neanderthal, and last the Crô-magnon and related types.

In China little evidence has come to light regarding this immense period of time, the Palaeolithic and the early Neolithic ages. Twenty years ago it used to be said that there were no relics of the Stone Age in China, yet in 1921-22 the author saw a number of Neolithic celts which had been discovered in Ssü-ch'uan by Professor D. S. Dye, and which he had then been collecting for many years. This collection is housed in the museum of the Union University, Ch'êng-tu, in Ssü-ch'uan, and it includes examples in jade. Thus early then another of the traditions of China began, and jade, one of the most distinctive materials of Chinese art, is seen to have been known and prized for over 5000 years.

More recent discoveries have revealed that, following these primitive Neolithic cultures, there arose other and more highly civilized peoples. While little or nothing is known about them their degree of civilization is shown in the more mature aesthetic

The Beginnings

feeling which their jade ceremonial axes and emblems display.

The theory that these people were, at one period, nomads, is no longer generally supported. The Chinese have always believed that their earliest ancestors were farmers, and this is one more of those beliefs which most archaeologists are now tending to accept as true. The legends describe the beginnings of agriculture and the Ancient Sovereigns who taught the people how to till the land. They frequently mention the Yellow River, though not the Yangtse, and this discrimination finds a reason in archaeological discoveries, which show that the terrain of the Yellow River and its tributaries was the cradle of the race. Analysis of the primitive pictograms also reveals the antiquity of a symbolic interpretation of the universe. In connexion with an ancient *motif* like the dragon it is generally believed that the earliest known picture-writing symbols representing this monster were probably drawings of the constellation 'Scorpio', which in China was called 'the dragon'. This, of course, is but one example of many which might be given to illustrate ancient Chinese beliefs about the cosmos, and their ideas on astronomy.

Periods of plenty alternated with periods of fickle rainfall which left in their wake drought or flood. Through this inexorable discipline was moulded the fatalism leavened with laborious tenacity which distinguishes the Chinese character.

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In a description of Fu Hsi, the first of the Ancient Sovereigns according to Chinese history, occurs the following story. He was standing one day on a bank of the Yellow River when suddenly a dragon horse rose from the waters. On his back Fu Hsi noticed certain mystic signs which he transcribed, and later he evolved from them the eight trigrams, symbols of the eight spheres of the universe. In time diviners learned to use these symbols—observe natural phenomena and consult the spirits of the ancestors and so interpret the will of Heaven. The whole universe was believed to be one entity divided into eight spheres or elements and the visible world of Nature corresponded in every way with the invisible. In these spheres all things were related to each other on a sexual principle and the two symbols representing male and female were — — —. The spheres were, therefore, represented by eight permutations of these two primary symbols, as follows:

1. Heaven	☰	5. Wind	☴
2. Earth	☷	6. Thunder	☳
3. Water	☵	7. Vapour	☱
4. Fire	☲	8. Mountains	☶

Heaven was entirely male, Earth entirely female, while the other spheres divided these principles unequally but in certain definite ratios.

Chinese tradition assigns to the Emperor Fu Hsi the dates 2852-2738 B.C., but no one knows exactly

The Beginnings

when he lived or whether the name represents the title of an actual person or of a definite period in the development of culture when primitive Nature-worship was evolving towards a natural philosophy—possibly about 4000 B.C. But there is no doubt that the quasi-scientific ideas attributed to him appeared very early, and their logical form and completeness are remarkable when compared with similar systems of thought in the West. It is evident that the ancient Chinese loved their country-side: the streams sparkling through sunlit valleys guarded by mountains towering upwards till their snow-caps seemed to touch the heavens. All this majesty and beauty, they thought, could only be the visible reflection of an unseen universe, equally lovely and equally majestic. And so the symbolism they evolved for mountains, heaven, fire, &c., represented both visible and unseen qualities. Later in time these ideas influenced many great thinkers and, somewhat modified, they were codified to form a comprehensive system of philosophy. Its laws have had a lasting effect on Chinese thought, and its symbolism appears constantly in Chinese art and culture from early times to the present day. But gradually the system degenerated into a stereotyped form of necromancy, and for many years past the place of the ancient diviners has been taken by a charlatan class—the geomancers. These earn their livelihood by interpreting *fēng shui*, literally ‘the influences of wind and water’, in order to determine the

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most propitious sites for buildings and similar matters in which a decision affecting the future has to be made.

The eight trigrams were often shown grouped to form an octagon, the central space being given to a circle filled with two comma-shaped forms interlocked, a symbol for the united female and male principle entitled Yin and Yang. This octagon, symbolic of the harmonious universe, early became a feature in many departments of life. There is a reference on an ancient inscription which remarks that the old capital city of Lo-yang was propitiously set amidst the eight-sided hills. A tomb once existing in that region, which may have been built nearly two and a half millennia ago, was constructed in this same symbolic shape, and since that time the eight-sided form has always been popular in Chinese architecture, whether in construction or as a *motif* in decoration.

The eight trigrams were eventually multiplied by eight to form sixty-four hexagrams, and another system of divination by manipulating 'divining stalks' followed. This version of the original diagrams also appears frequently in art, but it was not invented till long after the reputed date of the Emperor Fu Hsi. Of Fu Hsi it was said:

'Before his time the people were like unto beasts, clothing themselves in skins, and feeding themselves on raw flesh, knowing their mothers but not their fathers.'

The Beginnings

This passage, taken with an analysis of the oldest ideograms, has led to the belief that a matriarchate once prevailed, but the Chinese themselves do not say so. In addition to the trigrams and their system of divination they ascribe to Fu Hsi the inventions of marriage, musical instruments, fishing nets, writing (which is also ascribed to other legendary benefactors), the worship of God, and many other marks of civilization. Of another early ruler, Shên Nung, generally known as 'The Divine Husbandman', it is said: 'He first fashioned timber into ploughs and taught the people the art of husbandry. He discovered the curative virtues of plants and instituted the practice of holding markets for the exchange of commodities.'

Huang Ti follows, the legendary Yellow Emperor, discoverer of copper and the inventor of weapons and bronze casting, with his empress who is still worshipped as the first to teach the people to rear silk-worms. Here again, recent discoveries have proved agriculture actually to have been in its early stages at about the date which Chinese legendary histories give to the early rulers.

These discoveries are still proceeding and they are disclosing a period in the history of the race which has, until recent years, been lost in the mists of antiquity. The excavations of 1935 reveal that Dr. Andersson's great discovery of the late Neolithic, Yang Shao cultures was an outstanding landmark in the long history of a race whose claim to a continuous

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march of development is now being checked and verified by him, by Professors Karlgren, Karlbeck, and others. The later finds, largely by Chinese ³⁰⁰⁰⁻²⁵⁰⁰ B.C. archaeologists, include spear-heads, axes, and other objects (probably emblems of regal and priestly authority) with large, plain, but finely wrought heads of jade fixed in bronze hafts and settings. The continued use of jade is noteworthy, while the evidence of bronze working at such an early date is remarkable. It is not yet clear how the culture-layers should be subdivided, but it seems probable that some of the stone implements and weapons remained in use during the early bronze age. Discoveries of primitive picture-writing symbols scratched upon tortoiseshell and bone also show the great antiquity of this script, of which the earliest examples previously known (as in the case of bronzes) belonged to the later Shang-Yin period.

Trade Roads and Pottery Some years ago Dr. J. G. Andersson's finds at Yang Shao and elsewhere set the wave of exploration going. One of his important discoveries was that these late Neolithic settlements existed not only at Yang Shao, in Honan (from which this period has taken its name) but also at many other points in Manchuria, Kansu and the far western fringes of Tibet. Most celebrated, because of their beauty, are the finds of red and black painted pottery urns from Kansu. But these are not typically Chinese, for they did not, apparently, influence later wares.



PLATE I. Carved Antler of the Shang-Yin Period in the form of a Horned Dragon's Neck and Head. The upper portion engraved with archaic characters: the lower with surface decoration of serpents, dragons, 'cloud and thunder' pattern, &c. Height 11 inches. British Museum. (*See page 48.*)

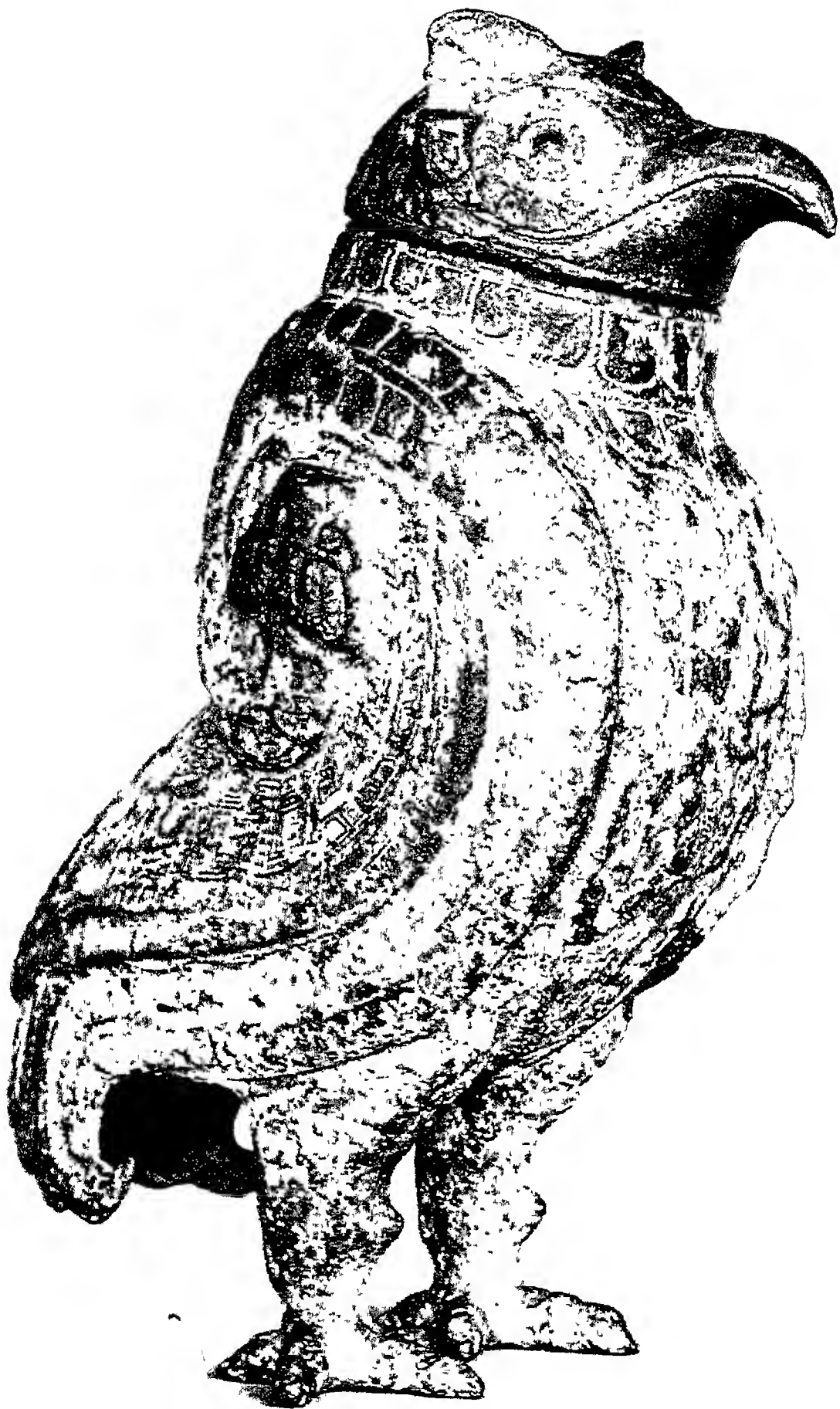


PLATE II. Bronze Wine-vessel in the form of an Owl or Parrot. Note the conventionalization of the plumage among which the 'cloud and thunder' pattern occurs. Note also the head (reversed) of the sacrificial victim on the wing. ? Chou dynasty. Height $8\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. (*See page 59.*)

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They have, however, much in common with the painted pottery of the Indus Valley, Susa and Anau in Russian Turkistan, and it is possible that even in those remote times there existed the well-known trade route across the deserts of central Asia from south-east Russia to north-west China and Kansu. (See map inside end cover.) This was later known as the 'Jade Road', the name it was given by the traders in the most precious of the burdens carried all the way from Khotan to China.

Another kind of pottery was coarse and grey, and its most typical form was a tripod cooking-pot—not the 'witch's cauldron' shape (which they also had, in common with Europe), but a tripod with bulging, hollow legs. It has long been known in the West, where examples in museums have generally been attributed to the much later Chou dynasty. The prototype may have been a pot with a pointed bottom (a type also found) and three of these may later have been combined to make three hollow legs while the three mouths were spread into one. The resulting hollow-legged tripod cooking-pot would have solved the primitive housewife's troubles forever, for food could be cooked in its hollow legs which stand high enough for a fire to burn beneath. This vessel seems to be unique to China and it has persisted—with gradual modifications—in a bronze form, throughout the ages. (See Fig. 1.)

Bits of pottery thrown out on the rubbish heap by a

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housewife of the Stone Age become the precious relics from which, five thousand years later, the archaeologist traces the sources of art and the progress of civilization. Buildings of stone and brick crumble in the course of time and are razed to their foundations; iron rusts, timber moulders, and woven fabrics fall to dust; but the worthless potsherds buried under the soft rubbish of forgotten ages can be recovered. When pieced together they are seen once more, much as they were when they left the hands of the potter. The craftsman, dead so long that even his bones have disappeared, displays his skill once again in the beautiful form of a thin-walled urn. Even his broken fingernail is recorded by the fine scores and ridges which encircle the inside surface of the pot. The potter's wheel has crumbled but its signs are left to prove how long ago it was invented. The forms of utensils speak of a great advance in the art of cooking, and therefore of civilization. Impressions of woven fabrics pressed upon the clay while it was still soft give pictures of the types of clothes and weaving. And so too the imprints of rice husks show the connexion of China's early civilization with the original home of cultivated rice in southern Asia.

The resemblance between the Neolithic painted pottery found in Kansu in north-west China, and that from the Indus valley, has already been mentioned. The presence of rice in China at such an early date, and certain similarities between the ancient picture-

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writing of China and the Indus Valley script, may prove to be the first indications that the 'Jade Road' was connected with a road into India, a route opened up by the remote migrations of the Stone Age.

On the other hand, Neolithic man in south-west Asia would seem to have had little or no connexion with his Far Eastern contemporaries, for he introduced into South Europe, not maize and rice, but a cultivated form of wheat of which the wild form has long since disappeared from the earth.

Another problem is the much-disputed connexion between the ancient races of China and North America. Both cultures seem to have used pits for storing grain, both have grown maize for an unknown period of time, and the North American Indian may have had a Mongolian colonist ancestor who migrated at a time when dry land joined Northern Asia with the American continent and spanned the space now divided by the straits and the North Pacific Ocean.

It is not known when the Neolithic period in China began and ended. But the prehistoric Yang Shao were entirely metalless cultures and seem to have belonged to the latter part of it—perhaps as late as 2500 B.C. They correspond in character to the later Neolithic cultures of Europe, cultures which had already been in existence at least five thousand years. Their distinguishing features are, first, the polished stone implements (especially the axe and the adze), sec-

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ondly, plaiting and weaving, then pottery and the art of cooking, and last, the domestication of animals and the beginnings of agriculture. Yet it is in China alone that the primitive forms of pottery and stone implements can be immediately recognized in their bronze and iron counterparts of a later, historic age, and some of the knives which can be seen in the hands of peasants to-day have changed little from their stone prototypes of four or five thousand years ago. They tell more clearly than any words the familiar story of that remarkable power the Chinese possess of preserving traditional forms all through their history.

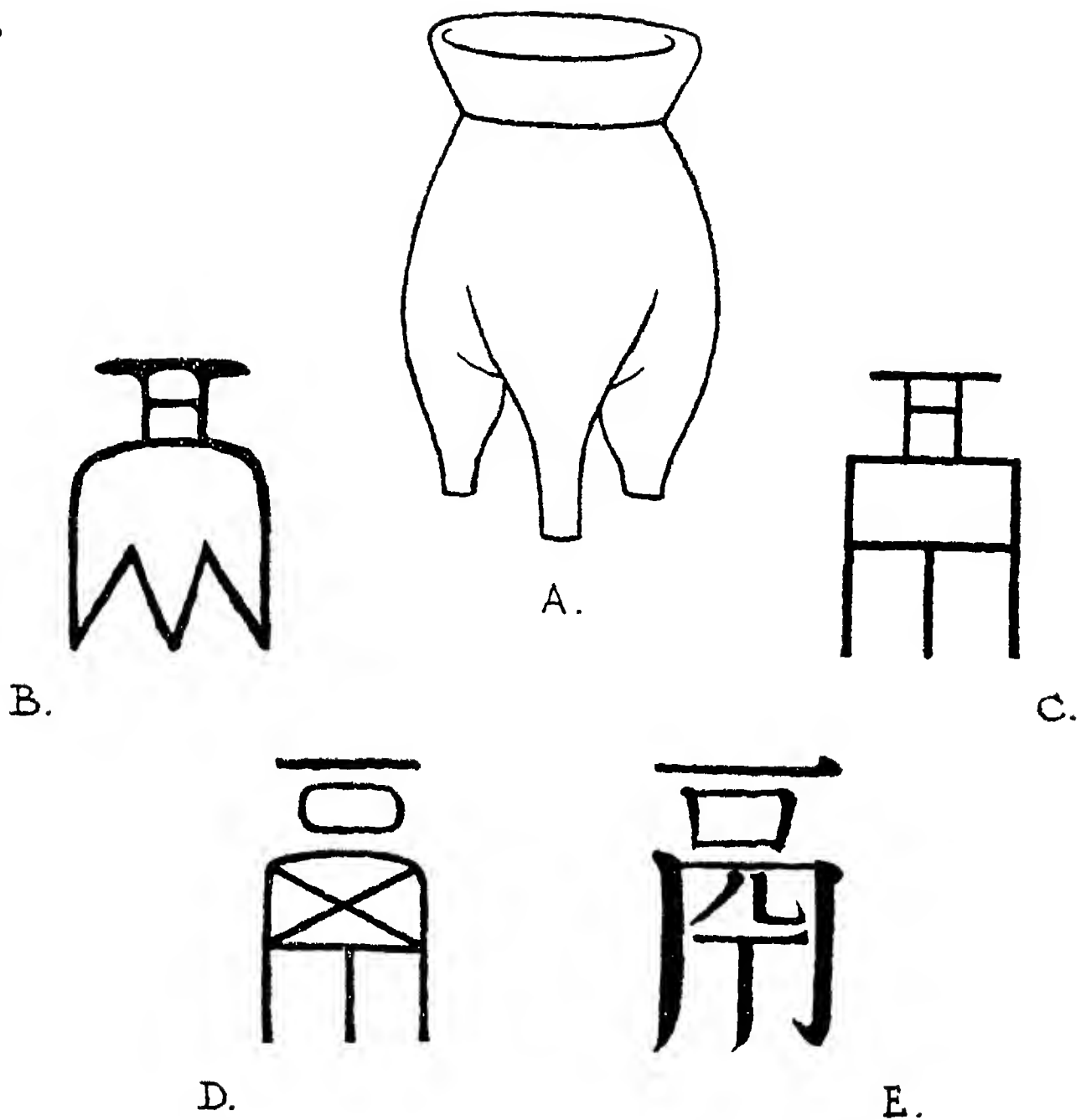


FIG. 1. STONE-AGE HOLLOW-LEGGED TRIPOD COOKING-POT

(A) Earthenware tripod cooking-pot of the Neolithic age. (B) Archaic character representing the tripod. (C) Character for the *Li* tripod, from a bone-fragment found at An-yang. (D) 'Small Seal' form. (E) Present form. Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

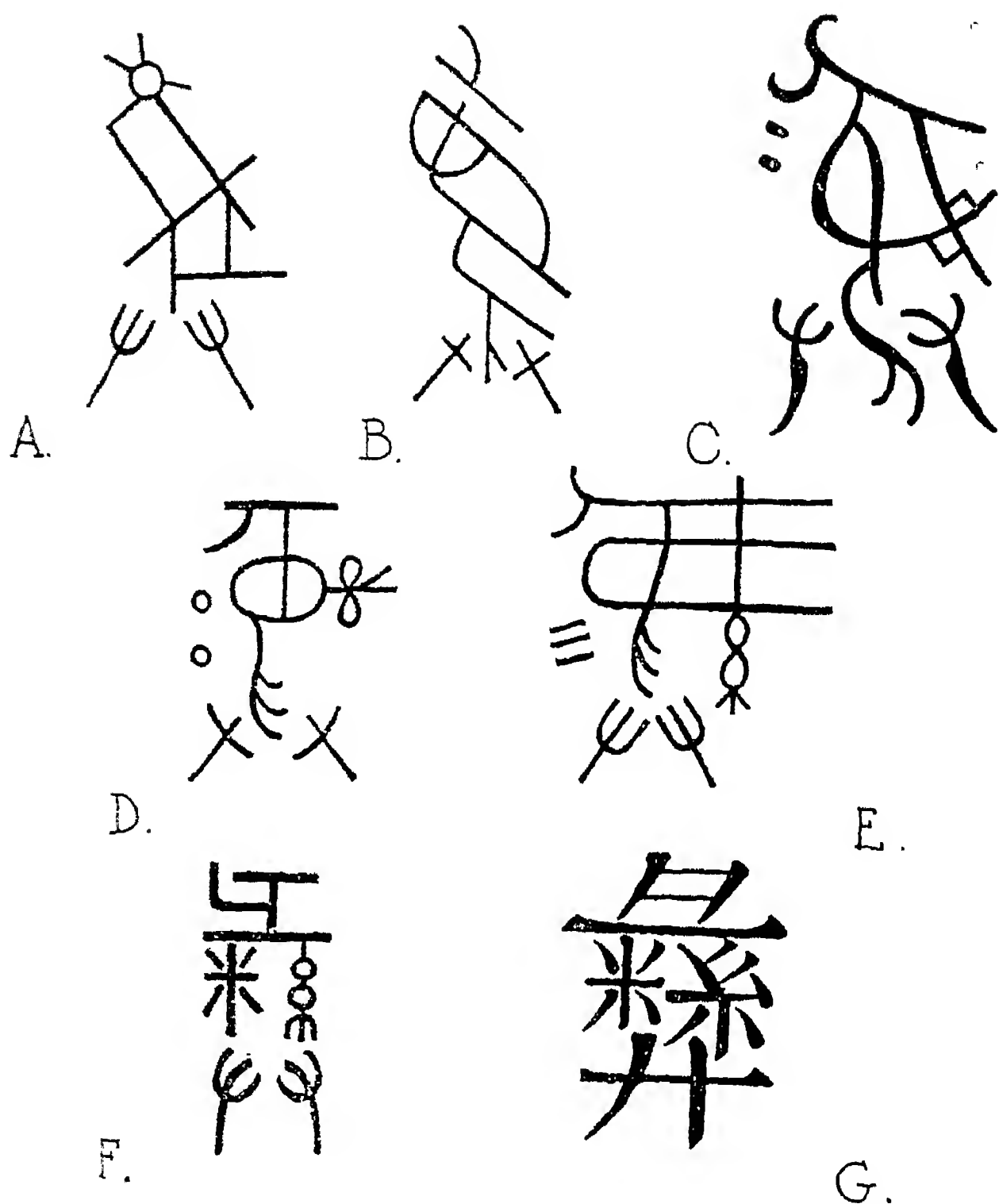


FIG. 2. I, A SACRIFICIAL VESSEL. EVOLUTION OF THE PICTURE-WRITING SYMBOL

(A) and (B) appear on bone-fragments, found at An-yang. (C) and (D) on bronzes from the 1st millenium B.C. (E) shows how the misplacement of units led to a wrong interpretation of component parts when script was standardized in the 1st century A.D. The two or more dots below the head of a bird being held up for sacrifice by two hands (clearly recognizable in 'C.'), probably represent drops of blood. These were confused for grains of rice in the Small Seal character (F), and the tail of the bird for silk cocoons. (G) Current form. Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

II

DAWN OF HISTORY, Approximately 3000 to 1122 B.C.

COCK-CROW SONG¹

Anon. (first century B.C.)

IN the eastern quarter dawn breaks, the stars flicker pale.
The morning cock at Ju-nan mounts the wall and crows.
The songs are over, the clock² run down, but still the feast is set.
The moon grows dim and the stars are few; morning has come to the world.
At a thousand gates and ten thousand doors the fish-shaped keys turn;
Round the Palace and up by the Castle, the crows and magpies are flying.

Only the scantiest traces of Chinese culture of the next fifteen hundred years or so have been unearthed, but there is a theory which seems to account for the hiatus.

The rain and the tumultuous rivers eventually carved tortuous ravines through the loess of the earlier Yang Shao settlements so that what had been fertile plateau was left high and dry, while the torrents drove deeper still, even at last cleaving gorges through the beds of solid rock. The levels of cultivation naturally dropped, successively descending with the years to follow the ever-deepening rivers, while new agricultural settlements grew up along the lower course and delta of the Yellow River, where it spread out over the plain.

New conditions had ushered in a new period.

¹*170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley (Constable & Co. Ltd.), p. 30.

²A water-clock.

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It is possible that the action of torrential rain and swollen river has washed away with the silt most of the relics of this intervening period and buried them under the alluvial deposit left by the frequent floods which devastated the land. Recent excavation supports the theory that the region bordering the Yellow River has been almost continuously inhabited since the New Stone Age. Several successive culture layers have already been unearthed and work is still going on.

Chinese history says that the early rulers were followed by Huang Ti, the legendary Yellow Emperor. He has already been referred to as the alleged discoverer of copper and bronze casting about 2600 B.C., a time when the conqueror Sargon of Agade had consolidated the empire of Babylonia in the West. Huang Ti's successors included his grandson and great-grandson, and after them came the emperors Yao and Shun, who are fully recorded by Confucius in the *Shu King*, or Book of History, and are still worshipped as ideal rulers at the memorial temple outside their ancient capital. Their reigns are said to have covered *About* 2200 B.C. a period which closed in 2206 B.C., when Shun, ignoring the claims of an unworthy son, selected as his successor an able minister, the great Yü.

Yü is famous chiefly because, according to legend, he succeeded in controlling and diverting the devastating waters of the Yellow River, and in dividing the land he had reclaimed into nine provinces; and also on account of the nine three-legged cauldrons of

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bronze which he cast from metal sent up as tribute from these provinces.

These Deluge stories, therefore, seem to support the theory that the previous inundations of the Yellow River may have washed away and buried under the mud most of the riverside settlements of the transition period from the Stone to the Bronze Age. They also appear to bear out the assumption that China had no distinct Copper Age. The reason given for this is that the copper ore mined to-day is always found in conjunction chiefly with tin but also with zinc, and such an ore when smelted would naturally produce bronze. It is possible therefore that the ancient bronze-founders never knew copper as a pure metal unalloyed with tin, and that is why they had no separate word for copper but only one word which meant 'the metal'.

The great Yü may well have been an historical personage. The Chinese themselves believe the story of his feats of engineering and irrigation and the tale of the nine bronze cauldrons. They became symbols of the new empire, and magical properties were ascribed to them. Passages in early Chinese literature indicate that they still existed in the seventh century B.C., and the famous bas-reliefs from Shantung include representations of the story of the loss and attempted recovery of one of them from a river in 219 B.C. (See Fig. 3.) These pictures in stone show a characteristic three-legged cauldron of the prehistoric

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pottery type already referred to, but the cauldrons themselves, although at one time they probably did exist, had disappeared before the beginning of our era. They are said to have been decorated with devils and spirits, perhaps the typical 'Ogre's Mask' and dragons which appear on later archaic bronzes, and like them they may have been inscribed.

Such inscriptions give a very clear idea of the evolution of picture-writing which at its maturity *Picture-writing* produced the twin arts of calligraphy and painting. In the West the rudimentary beginnings of picture-writing are said to have been found in the red-painted symbols on pebbles of the pre-Neolithic Azilian Age discovered in Spain, and are supposed to have been evolved from symbols of sun-worship. But the symbols incised upon later Neolithic pottery are also said to be the source. In China are found the authentic beginnings in actual pictures of objects. Some are very like the Indus Valley and other early symbols. A few, shown in Figs. 1 and 2, give the symbols for the hollow-legged cooking-pot, etc. Pictures of ideas are conveyed at first in an equally simple way. The pictograms for 'sun' and 'moon' are direct pictures of a disc and a crescent, and the two are drawn side by side for the ideogram meaning 'brightness'.

While the relics definitely known to belong to the transition period are as yet scanty, it was at this time that the foundations of an indigenous culture must have been laid. Numberless relics must exist and will

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eventually be unearthed from the successive layers of mud left by the Yellow River during this era of unequal combat between man the farmer and flood the fertilizer and destroyer.

Already the bronzes, jade emblems, painted and unpainted pottery, fragments of bone and tortoise-shell inscribed with archaic script, mixed up with earlier stone implements and shards, show that probably man had occupied the treacherous alluvial plain from 3000 B.C. Overwhelmed again and again, yet clinging with desperate tenacity to the land when the floods receded, it is not surprising that the legends of this people are so much occupied with tales of a hero who conquered the waters. They seem analogous with the Deluge stories (now seen to have been founded on fact), and the Deluge Hero who figures in Sumerian and Babylonian tradition.

The great Yü is said to have founded the Hsia dynasty at the close of the third millennium B.C., but almost nothing is definitely known about this period. At about the same time the House of Shang is first mentioned. Five hundred years later it was a chieftain of this clan who founded the Shang-Yin dynasty which lasted to about 1122 B.C. and of which, traditional records of later times give genealogical tables.

*Hsia and
Shang,
about 2205-
1122 B.C.*

The Chinese have always believed these records to be historically accurate, just as they believed the tradition that the writings of the Shang-Yin dynasty

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were engraved on tortoise-shell and bone, but it was only during the last few years that fragments of the actual archives of the dynasty found inscribed on shell and horn confirmed these beliefs. The discoveries were made in the bank of a river near the site of one of the ancient capitals of the dynasty at An-yang, in Honan. Chinese and foreign archaeologists are still recovering jade, bronze, tortoise-shell archives, and other evidence that this was once a palace site; and books recently published in China and Sweden give many illustrations of the finds. But enough has been found here and elsewhere to show that a high degree of civilization had been reached, in spite of war, storm, and flood, during the previous transition period from about 3000 B.C. The extensive and varied remains of bronze sacrificial vessels, weapons, bronze and jade ritual objects, and other things of beautiful design and highly stylized decoration, together with traces of charcoal, wax moulds, and other evidences of skilled bronze-founding tell that this was a developed Bronze Age culture in the grip of a long-established religion. Carved ivory miniatures of alligators, cowries, and tortoises show a more mature aesthetic sense in the treatment of *motifs* some of which were already popular in the earlier Yang Shao period. Bells and 'sonorous stones' indicate the beginnings of music. On painted pottery the so-called 'cloud and thunder' pattern, a fertility *motif* and a popular design from this time onwards, had already begun to evolve—some

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think from the archaic zigzag picture-writing symbol for 'lightning'—though it is more probable that it did actually develop from the spiral shapes of the symbols for 'thunder' and 'cloud' into its typical Greek key form.

Shards reveal that besides painted and unpainted or black wares a most surprising invention had already been made. The first glazing, found with a band of incised decoration on broken pieces of white, thin-walled pots, seems to put back the date for the invention of glazed earthenware more than a thousand years earlier than had previously been considered possible. On the other hand this glazing may be an accidental feature due to the chemical constituents of the materials. Egypt used to be thought of as the land where clay and glass were first united to form glazed earthenware. But the Shang-Yin jars, approaching porcellanous wares in their delicacy and hardness, have been said to demonstrate the age-long pre-eminence of the Chinese in the field of ceramic art and to make credible their tradition that they invented porcelain thousands of years ago. But, if they did, it seems strange that the art of glazing was thereafter forgotten until the Chou period. Perhaps the two kinds of earthenware discovered were used for two different purposes; the rough, heavier sort, with traditional mat imprinting on the surface, for ordinary use, and the finely turned, fragile white ware for holding the food and other necessities required by the dead and buried in

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the tombs. This would harmonize with the customs in the settlements of the previous Yang Shao Age, where the fine, painted urns have been found only in the graves and the rough, unpainted, mat-imprinted pottery on the sites of villages. The custom in later times, it should be noted, was cynically reversed, and poorer kinds of pottery were sold especially for grave use. There are several other theories which have been put forward to account for the two grades of pottery, but, at the moment, this problem remains as difficult of solution as the problem of the glazing on the white wares. But, apart altogether from theories as to their use, the vessels of this period show a great advance in technique over those of the Yang Shao and Kansu age.

The architecture of this period¹ has naturally disappeared, but the rammed earth foundations of large structures, probably the palace buildings, have been uncovered. The style and construction of these buildings remains an unsolved problem. Probably rammed earth was in use for the walls also: probably too these people already had a simple wood post-and-beam architecture. Custom dies hard in China, and if we turn for evidence to accounts in literature of the structures of the following dynasty they give us the following clues. The adobe walls perhaps stood upon rammed earth terraces and were screened by columned verandahs in the manner prevailing at the beginning of our era, and in fact resembling the traditional

¹These are the author's suggestions—not pronouncements.

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method of building in country districts at the present day. But this is sheer speculation, and the surmise is only justified by the natural assumption that a people at such a high level of civilization could hardly have lived in reed huts. No remains of brick or stone architecture, however, have been found.

Inscriptions on bone, shell, and horn provide the only clear-cut evidence of this civilization. Vast quantities of these have been found, while no other written records remain, and if inscribed bamboo tablets were also used, as they were later, they have long ago mouldered to dust. The tortoise-shell inscriptions are mostly concerned with a system of divination, and their translation and the consequent discoveries regarding the life and customs of the time are chiefly due to the long-continued labours of Mr. L. C. Hopkins. Priests addressed the questions to the spirits of the ancestors, and the replies were divined from the patterns of cracks which appeared in a piece of tortoise-shell after a heated metal rod had been thrust into it. The questions and replies were inscribed on the shells. Some of the inscriptions record the successive sovereigns of the dynasty. Accurate genealogical tables were necessary so that sacrificial rites to each ancestor should be duly performed, and this is in accord with the customs of later times. Texts on these bone and tortoise-shell fragments which have been deciphered disclose the fact that China at this time already had adopted a supersti-

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tious type of ancestor-worship which in one form or another has ever since held dominion over her.

The power of the priests increased and in time their conservatism stifled the free expression of the artist with lifeless rules, so that both shapes and ornament became frozen into mere stereotyped repetition of the official formulae. This was the same paralysis that has so often supervened with priestly ascendancy in other ages and cultures, when the spirit dies and only the empty shell of rite and ceremonial is left. Its beginnings can be seen in the conventionalized ornament on a carved antler from the An-Yang site. Antlers of this type, belonging to an extinct species of deer, are often found and are called by the natives 'Dragon Horns'. In this case the major portion of the antler has been carved into the form of a horned dragon's neck and head with indications of open jaws. It resembles the common form of Chinese dragon, the type usually thought to have been evolved many centuries later, and the face is also like the 'Ogre's Mask' already referred to. The bands of angular design which fill the unornamented surfaces are recognizable as an improvement on the earlier 'cloud and thunder' pattern, and also as the forerunner of decoration found on bronzes of a thousand years later. The rest of the enrichment is equally typical. One-legged dragons, serpents, and cicadas are all included with other ornament of unknown meaning, while some ideograms of the picture-writing inscription can be



PLATE III. Painted Earthenware Vase. Han Dynasty. British Museum. (*See pages 116 and 117.*)



PLATE IV. Stone Statue of a Horse Trampling on a Barbarian. Han sculpture group from the tomb of the young general Chü-p'ing, in the Wei valley. Musée Guimet, Paris. (*See page 104.*)

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seen on the upper, plain surface of the antler. This find alone therefore provides a library of information about this little-known period.

More arresting still, on account of their great beauty, are the graceful vases, libation cups, and incense-burners recently recovered by Bishop White and by Chinese archaeologists from the same district. Especially interesting are the fine stylized renderings of the 'Ogre's Mask', the elephant, silkworm, and cicada. The latter, because of its mysterious chrysalid metamorphosis, was perhaps a symbol of resurrection.

The emperors of the Shang-Yin dynasty were great hunters. They kept herds of wild animals in huge parks, and the bones of elephants and bears as well as of the extinct deer have been found. In a wild state none of these animals have inhabited China for many hundreds of years: a single herd of deer was still being preserved at Peking at the beginning of this century, but the only remaining descendants are now in England. But in the art of these and later times the elephant and the bear frequently appear in an increasingly stylized form. The white deer is also a common art *motif*, and in districts connected with legend has survived in mountain or place-names, such as 'White Deer Summit'.

Descriptions of these emperors—their palaces, their parks, their archives, and their posthumous influence through the mediation of priest-diviners—do not indicate the existence of one closely knit empire in

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China, but rather of a group of clans with a common basis of art and culture. In this group the most powerful clan lorded it over the rest, and thus a feudal system gradually emerged. But for many hundreds of years the outlying tribes remained beyond the jurisdiction of the reigning house and continually harried it, with varying success.

Archaeological evidence deals almost exclusively with finds dating from the latter part of the Shang-Yin period, about 1500-1122 B.C. But enough has been discovered to show that it was a developed and distinctive Chinese culture, and that already a deep-founded, wide-spreading base had been built for the structure of the civilization evolved later from traditional material. As the people had always been farmers it is natural that their religion took its form from husbandry and the seasons. The family became the important unit, as its members worked daily together in the incessant labour of agriculture. The father, the experienced farmer and literally the master of his family toiling in the fields, was accepted as the natural, inevitable head, and this recognition of rightful authority induced the patriarchal system and so ancestor-worship.

Dependence on sun and earth, rain and the fructifying passage of the seasons led to beliefs in their supernatural power. The Sun-father and Earth-mother were worshipped, and from them evolved the symbol Yin and Yang representing the female and male

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principle, a symbol which appears frequently in the art and in the complex nature-philosophy which grew up. The important seasons of seed-time and harvest became the important religious festivals at which all met together in the fields to work and to perform the traditional rites and ceremonies of hope or thanksgiving. The New Year or Spring festival saw fecundity rites, and the annual ceremony of ploughing the furrow was still being performed in modern times by the emperor—the Son of Heaven and the Father of his people.

Very early the attitude of acceptance (not resignation) must have appeared: acceptance of the facts of life—birth, growth, and death; a feeling of oneness with the earth and the visible universe, and later, through the mediumship of priest-diviners and ancestor-worship, of oneness with the invisible and spiritual world.

The original unit of the family became twofold, the earth-dwelling and the dwellers in the spirit-lands for a time divided from each other, yet through their religion perpetually united. The connexion between nature-worship and ancestor-worship was therefore real though not always apparent.

Not only the sun and the earth, but other phenomena of nature became animated with spirit inhabitants and were given symbolic forms in art expressing their special significance. The dragon first appeared as a beneficent nature-force. He lives in the sea and

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the rivers and ascends to the clouds. In the summer rainy season the characteristic thunder-storms are said to be caused by dragons fighting in the skies. Thus it is deduced that the prehistoric 'cloud and thunder' pattern accompanies the dragon as an art *motif* because both are connected in ancient nature-worship as fecundity symbols, for the rivers and the summer thunder-storms which brought the fertilizing rain are by this symbolism seen to be (like the sun) one of the grandest and most prodigal forces of nature.

The dragon boat festival—races held at regattas before the rainy season—is supposed to be a relic of imitative magic rites, the representation and therefore inducement of dragon conflicts in the sky, intended to encourage thunder-storms and abundant rain. Before long the all-powerful yet beneficent dragon naturally appeared as the emblem of the emperor. It was soon the chief in a universe which rapidly became peopled with hosts of spirits, most of them equally beneficent.

In contrast with some of the contemporaneous Mediterranean civilizations which were now arising the Chinese, with their emphasis on respect for authority, seem to have acquired an ethical rather than a religious outlook, although they were early devoted to magic and superstitious lore. There grew up, side by side, a belief in the spirits inhabiting trees and other natural objects, and a homely veneration for the old and for the forebears, of whom images at this time were made and worshipped. Most important

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of all as a formative factor was the traditional duty of child to parent. The primitive written symbol brings vividly before our eyes this cardinal virtue of filial piety. It is an ideogram composed of a picture of a son supporting his old father.

Thus the Shang-Yin period displays the indigenous cultural and ethical convictions which have had such a dominating influence upon the subsequent history of an art already typically Chinese in character. The period saw the consolidation of all those elements—government, religion, the calendar, language and writing, and a social system—with which art interacted to produce the solid foundation of archaic Chinese culture.

Its characteristics suggest an affinity with other early civilizations in the West. Chiefly on the evidence of alleged similarities in art and in the archaic forms of writing it has sometimes been assumed that both ancient Chinese and Sumerian cultures had a common source, perhaps somewhere in central Asia. No proof is yet forthcoming, but it is true that the typical animal ornament of the Shang-Yin period occurs also in Scythian and in Assyrian art and suggests common origin or later contact. Both in China and western and southern Asia the animal *motifs* were gradually stylized and simplified till all but essential features were eliminated, and the face of some fabulous monster becomes the usual form. The Ogre's Mask is the most frequent, but though it may be an

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argument only for a parallelism in the evolution of all archaic art, yet it is a striking fact that a similar mask is common to such widely separated centres as China, Siberia, India, Scandinavia, and the Mayan art of South America. In China its name is *t'ao-t'ieh* and it has been called 'the glutton'—a warning to those using the food-vessels on which it occurs. It is, however, more likely that it was a full-face picture of the dragon, the tiger, or a monster symbolizing storm, rain, and therefore the fertilizing power of nature. These symbolic animals became so conventionalized that they soon readily combined with (and appear as an integral part of) the geometric pattern—that most delightful element in an art which demanded a well-filled background. For the Shang-Yin discoveries show that even at this early date Chinese design was supreme in the field of pattern.

The recovery of relics from the Shang-Yin period sites is mentioned in Chinese literature as early as the eleventh century A.D., an age notorious for the craze for collecting antiques. This work is still going on, and the vitality and beauty of design in the newly found bronzes surpass anything previously unearthed. They help us to realize that it was from this virile people that the conception of a national culture sprang.

The story of the ending of the Shang-Yin dynasty resembles the later history of almost all Chinese dynasties. Of the barbarian tribes surrounding the

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territory of the Yellow River plain a few had been colonized. The governor of one of these tribes seceded and founded a new state, renaming the capital 'Chou'. By the middle of the second millennium B.C. the state of Chou rivalled in importance the parent state, and in a decisive battle a few years later the last emperor of the Shang-Yin was defeated and the House of Chou founded a new dynasty.

The Chinese histories tell of tall stone towers which the emperors built in their huge parks as vantage-points for watching the progress of the big game hunts in which they delighted. It was, they say, to one of these towers that the last emperor of the House of Shang fled, and there, having put on his imperial robes and surrounded himself with his treasures, he set fire to the buildings and burnt himself and them.



FIG. 3. ATTEMPTED RECOVERY OF ONE OF THE GREAT YÜ'S NINE BRONZE CAULDRONS FROM A RIVER

Reproduction of an inked squeeze or rubbing from a second-century carved stone relief from Shantung. Note that a dragon emerging from the cauldron has bitten through the rope so that the men who are pulling it fall over backwards. (See pages 40 to 42.)

From S. W. Bushell, *Chinese Art*, vol. i. By permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

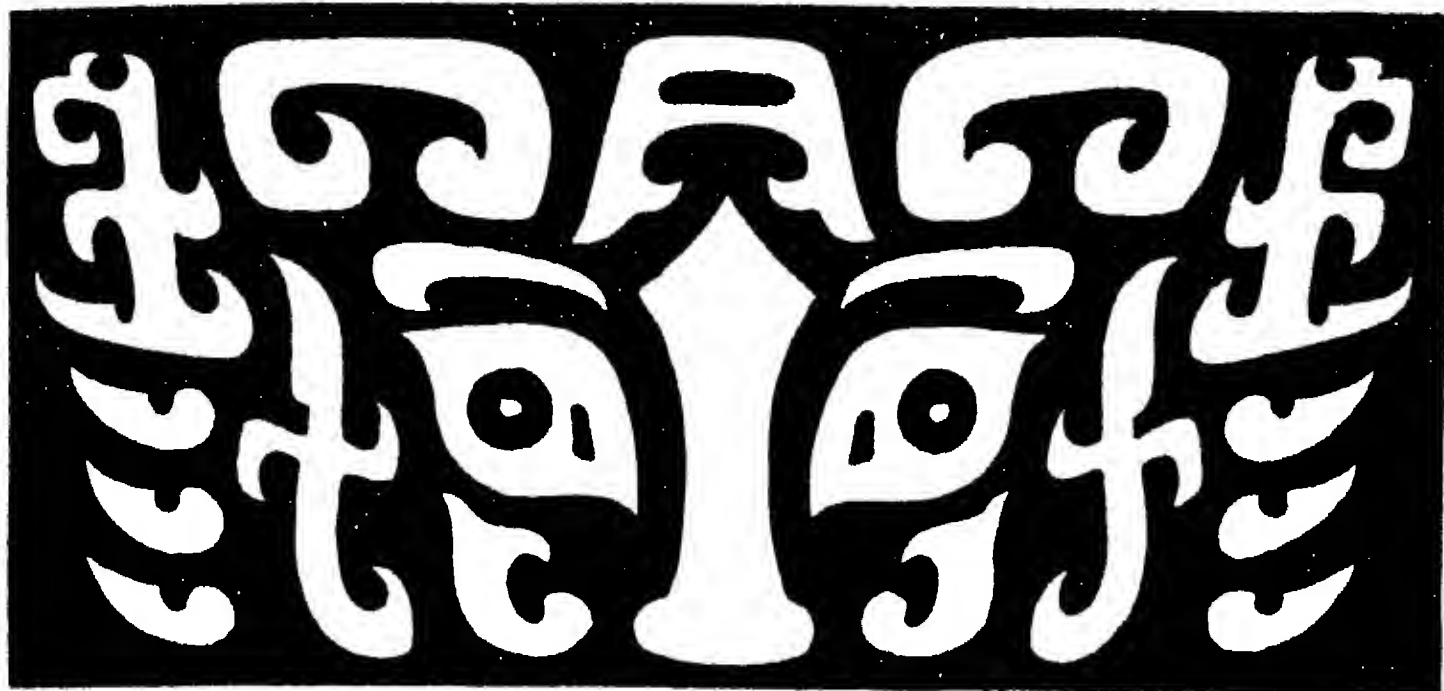


FIG. 4. A *T'AO-T'IEH*—OGRE'S MASK
(See pages 48, 53 and 54.) Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

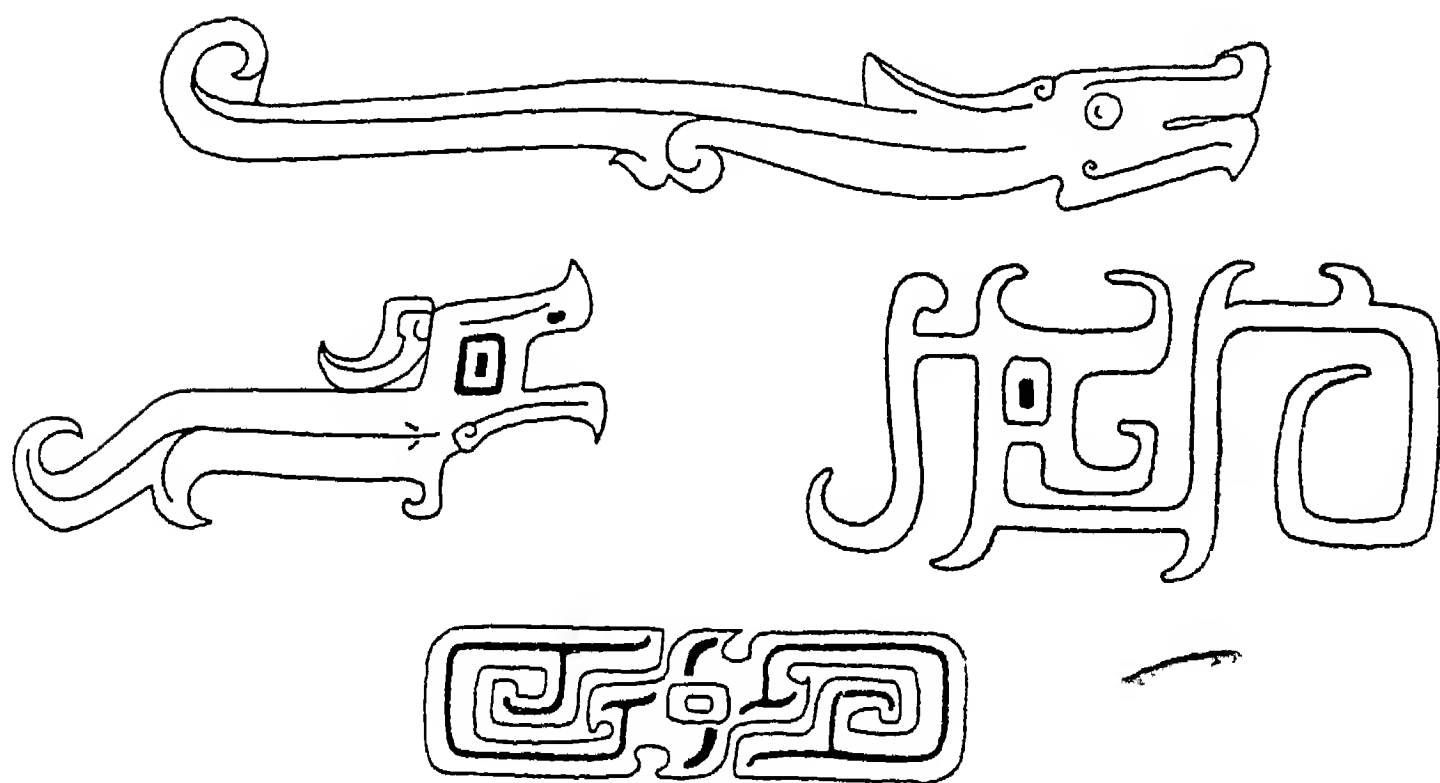


FIG. 5. TYPES OF *K'UEI*—ARCHAIC DRAGONS
(See pages 23 and 27.) Chiefly from objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Eumorfopoulos and C. T. Loo collections. Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

III

THE CHOU AND THE CH'IN DYNASTIES

? 1122-206 B.C.

OUR chariots were solid and strong,
Our teams of well-matched steeds;
Our chariots were shining and bright,
Our horses all lusty and sleek.

The nobles gathered round for the hunt,
And hunted as they closed in the ring,
The hinds and stags bounded on,
With the nobles in close pursuit.

Drawing our polished bows of horn,
And fitting arrows to the strings,
We drove them over the hills;
The hoofs of the chase resounded,
And they herded in close-packed mass,
As the drivers checked their horses.

The hinds and stags pressed swiftly on,
Till they reached the great hunting park.
We drove on through the forest,
And as we found them one by one,
We shot with our arrows the wild boar and elk.¹

With the new dynasty came the beginnings of a feudal system. The Dukes of Chou exacted allegiance from their vassal states, but the system was loose-knit and they were wise in not pressing their claims too far.

¹*Chinese Art*, S. W. Bushell, vol. i, pp. 34-5.

The above is a translation of the first ten odes inscribed upon the celebrated ten stone drums of the Chou dynasty which were, till recently, kept in the Confucian Temple at Peking. They are formed from roughly dressed boulders about three feet high and the inscriptions, cut into the stone face, were originally filled with gold. They are said to date from about the eighth century B.C.

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The traditional culture of the Shang-Yin dynasty was accepted and spread more widely across the North China plain, so that even barbarian states lying beyond the influence of direct colonization were affected. These tribes included the ancestors of the Hsiung-nu, horse-riding nomads of the north, who afterwards became the traditional enemies of the Chinese, and on the south the Ch'u, a race through whom influences from south-eastern Asia percolated. The Ch'in, and savage tribes later called Shu and Man-tzŭ (the latter known to the great Venetian traveller Marco Polo as 'Manzi') occupied on the west and south-west the territory fringing the foothills of Tibet. They in turn caused a few ripples to appear on the surface of the stream of traditional culture.

Perhaps the frogs which stand on the rim of those magnificent bronze war-drums of the Chou period are relics of these outlying states and represent tribal totems. The drums are characteristic of this time. Examples have been preserved in Japanese collections. Two others, later in date but in a similar style, legend says, belonged to the founder of the Shu Han dynasty, Liu Pei. One is in the British Museum, one is still venerated in an ancestral temple outside the South Gate of Ch'êng-tu, the capital of western China. Most characteristic of Chou bronzes are the heavy ritual vessels, in whose ornament the head of an animal probably perpetuated the likeness of the appro-

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priate sacrificial victim. (See Plate II.) It was essential that the sacrifices should be duly performed, and that the connexion between the members of the family—those on earth and those in the spirit lands—should be maintained. For without this connexion man would have suffered the horror of aloneness and namelessness in a world where the comforting conception of 'God' was unknown. This not only explains the solid, lasting form of the ritual vessels, it illustrates the diametrically opposed attitudes of East and West: China has always looked back into the past for reassurance, whereas Western peoples have looked forward to some form of immortality in the future.

Under the Chou dynasty a national consciousness first appeared. The power of both government and priesthood increased, and a tendency to systematize showed itself in every department of life. Although the forms and decoration typical of the Shang-Yin bronzes were handed down, they now tended to become stereotyped—geometrically perfect, aesthetically lifeless. The Chinese genius for preserving and formalizing choked the genius for free artistic expression. (See Fig. 9.) Nevertheless the artist could not always be bound down by lifeless rules, and some of the bronzes, especially the naturalistic animals, and many of the jades, in particular those small, caricature-like figures of courtiers, show that he could still recapture a true brevity of statement and living line.

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It has been explained in the previous chapter that the Chinese had no name for pure copper but only a word which meant 'the metal', synonymous with bronze. No doubt this was because, through carelessness and natural ignorance, the first metal workers melted their copper ore full of such impurities as zinc and tin, thus accidentally discovering the casting of bronze. Having gone so far, it was not long before they also discovered iron-smelting. Tribute-lists of the Chou dynasty itemize hard and soft iron, and give the names of many articles in which the metal was used. The accounts testify to an expert craftsmanship, but the metal itself has rusted away and only its records remain. There are many reasons for the persistence and popularity of bronze and the comparative neglect of iron. Rust is only one. Bronze was the traditional metal: the very shapes still imitated ancient pottery forms (as shown in Fig. 1), and tradition had grown so strong that it all but throttled Chinese art at this period.

The Nine Cauldrons of the Great Yü still survived as symbols of imperial power, but now every noble was also allowed a group of bronze vessels as insignia of rank, varying in number and type according to his station. The origin of this custom was no doubt the distribution of the vessels from the ancestral temple among his followers by the founder of the Chou dynasty when he appointed them rulers over the vassal states. Owing to its durability bronze became fashion-

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able also as the medium for transmitting records of important events. Inscribed vessels were cast in designs hallowed by long usage in traditional rites, and their inscriptions formed a lasting addition to the family archives. Most of them have long since disappeared, but of those that survive one of great interest is still preserved in the monastery on Silver Island, near Chinkiang, on the Yangtse. It is decorated with a band of coiled *k'uei* (one-legged dragons) and rows of fish-scale ornament, and in the centre of each scale the 'thunder' pattern can be seen. (See Figs. 4 and 5.) A *t'ao-t'ieh* (Ogre's Mask) appears at the junction of each of the three legs with the body of the cauldron, and the inscription is on its inner surface, and is sunk below it. The record tells how the king honoured with his brevet a certain minister Hsü Hui in the ancestral temple of the Chou. A translation of the latter part of the inscription runs as follows:

'Hsü Hui entered the gate and stood in the centre of the Hall. The King ordered his Private Secretary to record his Brevet to Hsü Hui in these words: "Minister of Public Works, appointed to keep watch upon the Tigrine Quarter (the West), We present to you a Dark Robe, an Embroidered Border, a Halberd, an Inlaid Lance, a Plain Apron, a Red Jacket, Reins and Bridle, and a Banner with Bell Ornaments."

'Hsü Hui, in acknowledgement, made bold to extol the manifest and gracious favours of the Son of Heaven, and has accordingly fashioned a sacrificial cauldron for use in votive services to his late illustrious Sire, and in pray-

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ing for length of days and for an endless posterity to treasure and use it.'¹

The cauldron is noteworthy not only because Hsü Hui's prayer seems to have been granted but because experts agree as to its genuineness. Its date has been the subject of much discussion, but it is generally ascribed to a time between about 1100 and 800 B.C. This and other ancient inscriptions amplify the Chinese histories and help to give a fairly accurate picture of the customs and costumes of the period.

The Chinese themselves have for two thousand years regarded the Chou dynasty as the classic age of national culture, and all subsequent ages have looked back to it for the pattern of perfection in manners and customs, in social institutions as well as in art.

With the increase of wealth and power the influence of the emperor also increased. Subtle changes began to show themselves in the religion, which became centred in the sovereign. He was declared to be the Son of Heaven and therefore the only fit intermediary between Heaven and the Earth dwellers. He conducted the annual sacrifices as a high priest on behalf of his people, whose interests, like their religion, were still mainly agricultural.

At the same time the belief in a multitude of spirits and demons continued, and local cults appeared. Perhaps the most persistent features of this old nature-

¹Translation by Mr. L. C. Hopkins who has kindly permitted this quotation.

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worship are the Five Sacred Mountains, representations of which appear frequently in later art. So divinities of mountain, tree, or river held sway, and many of these beliefs were perhaps coloured by influences which reached China by way of the outlying states and mountain tribes in contact with India. These semi-foreign states became more important with the years. One of the greatest was founded on the western borders in the ninth century B.C. by an enterprising horse-dealer who, in course of time, had become a favourite at court. Several hundred years later this House of Ch'in became so powerful that it supplanted the Chou dynasty, and as its fame spread to foreign lands they gave its name—China—to the empire it had consolidated.

Another of these princedoms, the southern state of Ch'u, was the birthplace of the famous *Lao-tzŭ* philosopher Lao-tzŭ in the sixth century B.C. He enjoyed a great reputation, perhaps because no one could understand him. The essential core of his teaching was *Tao*, which is usually thought to be a name for the elemental power in nature as the origin of all things. For the rest he appears to have propounded a mystic nature-philosophy of quietism, contemplation, and receptivity. The doctrine felt the influence of Hindu ideas which penetrated from the south-west into the region of the Ch'u state where Lao-tzŭ was born. The ancient worship of spirits added further confusion as the cult spread till it



PLATE V. Hill Jar in Green Glazed Pottery. Han Period. Victoria and Albert Museum. (*See page 117.*)



PLATE VI. Men in Conversation. Painting of the late Han period. From the Han dynasty tomb bricks now in the Boston Museum. (*See page 121.*)

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reached the far West, whither, legend says, he vanished at the close of his long life. This episode is one of the most popular represented in art, and the usual version shows Lao-tzŭ as a very old man riding away on an ox. The innumerable deities and fairies and the superstitious practices which later characterized Taoism, by their appeal to the craftsman's emotions and imagination, enriched the storehouse of decorative art. But this religion retained little of an early quietist philosophy and soon no semblance remained of the attitude revealed in Lao-tzŭ's reported sayings:

'Keep behind and you shall be put in front.'

'Recompense injury with kindness.'

'Mighty is he who conquers himself.'

'He who is content has enough.'

These are the more remarkable when one remembers that Lao-tzŭ lived about five hundred years before Christ, who also said 'The last shall be first' and 'Do good to them that hate you', or Seneca, who pronounced that 'To master one's self is the greatest mastery', or Cicero, who wrote 'I do not perceive why he who is happy requires to be happier'.

Taoism, arising in the south, grew to a debased maturity and remained most popular there, a religion rich in a southern wealth of imagery. Its new art *motifs* were gradually added to such time-honoured emblems as the Ogre's Mask, the thunder pattern, the dragon, turtle, unicorn, and phoenix. Of the four last the unicorn and phoenix were also fertility *motifs*, but

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it is not yet known whether they appeared as early as the dragon and the turtle, though they rival them in popularity. The cicada and the 'recumbent silk-worm' also occur, and the elephant, the tiger, and the bear appear in stylized designs on bronze, and at times on jade, two of the most permanent and popular materials. (See Fig. 6.)

Jade, in a great variety of colours, had been prized from prehistoric times and, as we have seen, occurs in the Shang-Yin finds. Emblems of sovereignty and symbols of heaven, earth, &c., were carved in white, blue, black, and other jades, and in the Chou period these and a large number of similar ritual objects were made in strictly regulated shapes and colours and prescribed for use in the rigid observances of the time. They included carved weights for placing on the eyes of the dead, tongue-pieces in the form of the cicada—symbol of immortality. There were also umbilical roundels, models of pigs placed in the hands of the dead, and many other objects whose use survived to later times.

Little is known about architectural materials and forms. Rammed earth, sun-dried brick, and timber were probably still the materials in common use, but they have disappeared. There was no direct contact with Western civilizations, so that their ideas of imperial aggrandisement, of monuments and palaces which should be permanent memorials of the might of great conquerors remained unknown to the Chinese,

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who were interested in the business of farming, the science of government, and the art of living, not in trade expansion and conquest. Although stone was available and became more common later, they were content to use less permanent and more easily fashioned earth and timber. We read that

‘the imperial palace consisted of a vast enclosure, surrounded by high mud or brick walls, in which were the following: the dwelling-houses of the emperor, the empress, the concubines, and their servants; the offices of the ministers, reception halls, and temples; shops for weaving silk and hemp for the use of the court; treasuries for the preservation of the imperial archives, historical documents, jewellery, and other precious belongings of the state or the emperor; depositories for stores and all that was necessary for the maintenance of life. In other words it was a walled city within the capital city, reserved for the emperor, his household and his government; and the monarch seldom left it except in his official capacity.’¹

It was in fact the model for all the palaces yet unbuilt, the last of which—the Forbidden City in the centre of Peking—is a magnificent example.

So too costumes, ceremonial, and customs of the Chou dynasty became the models for future ages. The exactitude and perfection of technique characteristic of the latter years of the period can best be seen in the magnificent sacrificial vessels of bronze. Later in date than the Silver Island cauldron, they reveal a greater

¹*Outlines of Chinese Art*, J. C. Ferguson (the University of Chicago Press).

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mastery, yet this technical perfection is marred by the curious rigidity which traditional formalism had imposed upon the artist. It was as if the body of art performed its functions in the state of coma preceding death and *rigor mortis*. Fortunately it was revived just in time as the result of a succession of shocks administered to the social structure by that dynamic personality, the founder of the succeeding dynasty.

Confucius, the most celebrated of China's great men, lived when the power of the house of Chou was paramount. His name was K'ung Ch'iu and his honorary title was *Ta fu tzü*, 'whence he came to be called K'ung Fu-tsze, and this appellation, latinized by the Jesuit translators, has taken the form in which his name is known in European literature'. (*The Chinese Reader's Manual*. W. F. Mayers.) The Latin version has combined the name and the honorific into one. Confucius will always be revered because, single-handed, he did more than generations of his predecessors to consolidate Chinese culture. He did not found a religion, but he formulated a code of ethics based upon the traditional worship of ancestors. He did not form a school of literature, but he re-edited the classics already in existence. He did not introduce fresh customs, but he gave meaning and new life to old observances and emphasized the importance of good manners and ceremonial. From his work and his convictions as philosopher, historian, and aristocrat grew his capacity and prestige as a statesman. But his

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conception was the 'superior man', the gentleman, an essential cog in the complex but efficient machinery of the State, not the athletic, intelligent free man, the ideal of Greek civilization. Confucius was an agnostic, and the supreme importance he gave to tradition, order, and rightness ultimately deteriorated amongst his followers into mere respect for age, ceremonial, and a good façade. Not to 'lose face' became essential, and there emerged an undue conservatism and an irrational insistence on the value of empty form. Thus Confucius, the superior man, was unwittingly responsible for tightening the grip of formalism upon an art already bound down by laws and restrictions.

Yet in some ways his influence on aesthetic development was invigorating. From the earliest times the custom of interring a great variety *Sculpture* of things for the use of the dead had continued. Wives, servants, and animals also were buried alive in the graves of chieftains. Confucius condemned this custom of immolation, and went still further and deprecated even the use of jointed wooden figures because of their too close resemblance to the human victims of the old barbaric rites. Although immolation, as a part of the funeral ceremonies of emperors and nobles, did not completely die out for many centuries, with a general adoption of these new ideas appeared the custom of substituting pottery statuettes for the sacrifices at these hecatombs. Then the burial of earthen imitations of precious objects also came into use, for

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if a clay model of a wife would do, why not clay models of other things? As time went on, the models, known as *ming-ch'i*, were made with greater care. It is to their endless variety and the superstitious fear which has ensured their preservation in hundreds of thousands of graves that modern scholarship owes so much of its knowledge of life and art in ancient China. Stone figures of retainers and animals, many of them larger than life size, were often placed outside the imperial tombs as a substitute for the practice of living burial. It soon became customary to increase the impressiveness of the funeral observances by arranging these sculptured figures in long imposing avenues leading to the huge mound of earth which was thrown up to form the mausoleum. This practice began in Chou times, and though remains of these statues have not been discovered they are mentioned in concurrent writings, and much-weathered and damaged examples have been found near graves dating from a few hundred years later. Before long a legend grew up explaining that their purpose was to scare away the demons that devour the dead.

The rough earthenware grave figures already referred to were by no means the best that the
Pottery Chou potters could turn out. Little of the finer wares has survived, but enough to show that in technique there was not much advance upon the types produced in the Shang-Yin period. In fact the appearance is less attractive since a hard grey clay, unpainted

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and with no moulded decoration beyond the very simplest, was usually employed, and the one noticeable feature is the potter's success in adding legs, lids, and handles to bodies of more graceful form and in general imitating the shapes of bronze vessels. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that the potter's apparent lack of technical ability was due not to careless ignorance and an inferior culture but to a deliberate, conscious attitude. Just as the Greeks knew how to construct the arch, but, regarding it as an unaesthetic form, deliberately refused to use it in their buildings of the best period, so the Chinese, since they had bronze, seem to have regarded pottery as unfit for ceremonial or formal use, and therefore relegated it to the class of 'vessels of dishonour'. At any rate, we find in a book written in the fifth century B.C. the statement that 'Pattern and bright colours detract from the merit of pottery'.

The potter's wheel, which had been in use in hither Asia prior to 3500 B.C., in Egypt since the *The Potter's* Fourth Dynasty—about 3200 B.C.—and in *Wheel* making the Minoan pottery of Crete about 3000 B.C., was first used in China probably a little later, and during the Chou dynasty references to it are made in the writings of the time.

One type of pottery which was 'thrown' on the wheel specially deserves mention since it is *Glass* studded with remains of coloured glazes. This may be one of the prototypes in earthenware of similar

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decoration, with glass inset like jewels, which occurs on bronzes of the following (Han) period, though this pottery also may date from the Han Dynasty and may have been made to imitate the bronzes of that time. For it must not be forgotten that this was an age which displayed an increasing tendency to copy bronze forms in pottery. Excavations at a Chou dynasty tomb site at Lo-yang, in Honan, yielded finds of very beautiful coloured beads, buttons, and fragments of vases in glass. The latter prove to have been made by winding white-hot rods of glass round a sand and clay core, the technique used in the West up to the time of the invention of blowing and moulding early in our era. If further investigation confirms the authenticity of these finds it will indicate the existence of a highly developed glass industry in China at least six hundred years earlier than the Chinese histories record. There is ground for this assumption because Chinese glass of this early date contains much lead, whereas coeval Mediterranean glass does not. Yet one of the favourite designs, the so-called 'revolving eye' *motif*, was well known in the glass of the Mediterranean civilizations during the last few centuries before Christ. It occurs in Chinese art of later times and is still used in painting the rows of circular rafter-feet under the eaves of buildings, and on the prows of junks. The symbolic significance of this eye has been much discussed without definite result, but it is supposed to have been placed on either side of the bows of boats so that they

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could find their way among the reefs and shallows of the Yellow Sea and the treacherous lower reaches of the rivers. At any rate the feature does not usually occur on the craft which ply the less dangerous upper courses of rivers far inland. Many beautiful pictures in colour of the rich and fantastic types of these two-eyed vessels can be seen in Ivon Donnelly's attractive but little-known book, *Chinese Junks* (Kelly & Walsh, Ltd.).

Of painting as a fine art no trace remains, but there are allusions in literature, and Confucius is said to have admired the mural paintings of the time. He strongly approved of art, not for its own sake, but for its beneficent influence on human nature. The so-called 'spiral writing', which was described in the chapter on the Shang-Yin period, persisted with little change throughout the Chou dynasty. In Figs. 1 and 2 the later, written examples of the pictograms for the tripod cooking-pot, and others, are evident improvements upon the earlier types which were scratched with some kind of pointed instrument. But it was not till the next dynasty that drastic changes were introduced, when scribing with a pointed instrument began to fall into disuse, and handwriting with the new writing-brush brought about modifications which aided development towards the art of calligraphy. This brush was probably an improvement on existing brushes only through the use of sable or similar fine hairs.

Up to this time the centre of Chinese civilization

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still remained the low-lying plain alternately flooded and drained by the Yellow River and its tributaries. The princedoms which lay on the borders jealously watched the waning power of the ruling House of Chou, and watched too the inroads through the northern hills of the Hsiung-nu, horse-riding nomads who had already become the nation's traditional enemy. If China's feudal territory can be thought of as a wheel with the ruling House as the hub, then the surrounding states can be likened to the wedge-like spaces between the spokes radiating from and owing allegiance to the hub of central government. But on the north there was no powerful buffer-state, and the Hsiung-nu were slowly driving a wedge in towards the axle-pin, the capital of the Chou, which was ultimately moved south to a safer site. The feudal system had become unbalanced, and of all the vassal states the Houses of Ch'u on the south and Ch'in on the west were the best organized and most powerful. The domain of the Ch'in included roughly the present province of Shensi and north Ssü-ch'uan and was enclosed therefore by the upper reaches of the Yellow River on the east and the Yangtse on the south. From now on the well-wooded, hilly region surrounding the upper Yangtse plays a larger part in history, and this river terrain assumes almost equal importance with that of the Yellow River. (See map inside front cover.)

In 221 B.C. the great champion of the Ch'in dynasty achieved a signal victory over his rivals and founded

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an empire. He styled himself Shih Huang Ti or First Emperor. As Prince of the wild western state of Ch'in he was something of a foreigner and his career was in every sense spectacular and un-Chinese.

Yet the very faults of this conquering despot ^{Ch'in} ^{Empire} ultimately achieved good effects, for by his ^{221 B.C.} bloody victories he welded China into one great empire and spread its fame far into the Western world. New lines of communication were opened up and traffic in goods and ideas flowed into a China organized and ready to receive them.

Shih Huang Ti's egoism was boundless. He decreed the collection and melting down of the bronzes, many of which bore historic inscriptions, and the burning of all the ancient books and records, hoping by this means to wipe out the evidence of China's previous greatness and secure his claim to the title First Emperor. But even these drastic measures in the end worked for good because they broke the bonds of conservatism and convention which under the Chou were slowly constricting art and culture. Shih Huang Ti, on the contrary, enthusiastically accepted new ideas, and numbers of new monuments arose to give them expression and to gratify his unquenchable lust for fame and power. Thus by the destruction of the books and bronze works of art, by his expansion and consolidation of the empire, and then by the demand for new buildings and their adornment he all unknowingly revitalized the aesthetic life of the nation. Like most

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great conquerors his megalomania ran first to vast destruction and then to a vaster reconstruction. He was victorious over the dreaded hordes of Hsiung-nu, drove them into the far north and flung the Great Wall of China across a thousand miles of new mountain boundary. The Great Wall has been called the most considerable work of man upon earth and the only one which would be visible from the moon. The truth of this statement seems likely to remain in doubt, but one feels that the shade of Shih Huang Ti would heartily approve it. For every palace destroyed in a conquered capital he erected a replica in his own, and as a convenience for himself and his staff the emperor built hundreds of palaces throughout the land to serve as provincial head-quarters during his tours of inspection. He was continually setting up stone monuments and statues to commemorate this or that event: even the frequent landings he made on a voyage up the sea-coast were not thought too trivial for another series of great memorials. But of all this extravagance only portions of the Great Wall remain. Its construction strengthened and extended existing earthworks and went on for many years. Tens of thousands of men were employed upon it, and the famous general Mêng T'ien was in charge of the work.

Mêng T'ien's fame, however, rests largely upon the legend that he was the inventor of the writing-brush. Until his time the written characters were also scratched with a pointed instrument upon tortoise-

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shell, bone, ivory, and, lastly, bamboo tablets in much the same way as the Romans wrote with a stylus upon wax tablets. Brushes were, of course, already in use: the red and black decoration on the pottery vessels of the Yang Shao era from Kansu was obviously painted with the brush, and the kit of a lacquer-worker with earthenware palette, container, and brush has been recovered from a tomb of the third century B.C. At this time, it appears, the small fine-hair variety was also developing into a novel type resembling the delicate pointed brush of hare or rabbit's fur which is employed to-day. The use of ink in place of (or, rather, in addition to) pigments may date from the Chou or early in the Ch'in dynasty. Indian ink, once thought of as a fourth-century invention, was probably known much earlier, and in a dry form it was exported to *Ink* India from China. They made it from the soot of burning pine twigs, or of oil obtained from the nut of the tree *t'ung shu* (*Aleurites cordata et Fordii*), peculiar to their country. This oil was also used for caulking junks, waterproofing paper umbrellas, manufacturing paint, and for other purposes, while to-day, under the name 'wood-oil', it is an ingredient for making varnish in Western countries. In China the ink-cake is still rubbed down with water on a stone palette until it reaches the required consistency for writing or drawing on woven silk. Perhaps this was the method over two thousand years ago. At first only sheets or scrolls of silk were used, but by the beginning of our era the

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manufacture of paper from silk rags had been invented, a form of paper-making which was first adopted in England about 1750. Yet curiously enough the Chinese historians do not seem to have concerned themselves with such matters for, as in the case of glass, the mention of paper does not occur in literature before the second or third century A.D. The tree *t'ung shu* grows best on hilly ground in the rainy, temperate climate of the upper reaches of the Yangtse river, and it is this region which is still the centre of the great brush-making industry. So possibly the House of Ch'in, which dominated a part of this area, did actually (as the legend states) produce the first fine brush-writing, the materials for which were all at hand.

*Writing-
Brush and
Changes in
Script* The adoption of the freely moving finely pointed brush for writing on silk, produced a rapid, flowing movement and probably diminished the size of the characters, making it difficult for the brush to follow the sweeping curves of the old 'spiral writing'. The strokes naturally became those which were more easily made in fine brushwork than by a heavier brush and scribing tool. The new handwriting was before long further improved by Li Ssü who, according to legend, invented the Small Seal character. This was a modification of the older Great Seal character, so called because of its suitability for seal inscriptions. The Small Seal often diminished the number of strokes in a symbol and made the writing simpler and quicker. As a matter of fact,

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however, this was only one of several different scripts current in the Ch'in period.

Li Ssü is said to have been also a champion of the emperor's radical policies, the destruction of the feudal system with everything else which belonged to the past, as a means of vitalizing the new empire. He was unsuccessful. Tradition and the concepts of Confucius were too deeply rooted in the souls of the people. Many of the books and bronze treasures were hidden in house walls or buried and thus escaped destruction, while the emperor earned the hatred of the great class of cultured men, hundreds of whom he had put to death. Still he went on his way fighting, travelling restlessly through the land, building, organizing, and doing all things on a more savage and lavish scale than was ever done before or since. He built his most famous palace, the Ah Fang King (or O-p'ang Kung), on the banks of the river which flowed through his great hunting park of Shang Lin. *Architecture*

The palace was 500 feet long and 250 feet wide, and within it 10,000 people could be seated. Though every trace has disappeared it is well known from descriptions in literature, from poems and paintings, and especially from a picture made by a famous artist in 1100 A.D. This is evidence that the design, developed from the Chou palaces, displayed the principal features which have been reproduced in Chinese architecture ever since. Some of these palaces, so it is said, had bronze columns and were decorated with mural

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paintings. The composition was, no doubt, like early Indian painting, so designed as to fill the available surface completely and avoid any of those empty spaces of which the artist of this time was so afraid. The subjects were allegorical and legendary, scenes from the lives of the great rulers and sages of the past, and they were probably painted direct on to the walls, which they covered from end to end, of a courtyard enclosure or a hall of audience. Remains of this type of painting, many hundreds of years later in date but in the same tradition, can be seen in the temple frescoes in out-of-the-way country districts to-day, and their fabulous monsters vividly recall the descriptions in literature of the earliest Chinese paintings and their mythological subjects.

The most remarkable sculptures of this reign commemorated the legendary appearance of twelve giants, fifty feet in height, in the far western province of Ssü-ch'uan. The emperor commandeered all the bronze utensils and weapons he could lay his hands on, and melted and cast them into twelve colossi in order to immortalize the event. Probably, however, this merely provided a heaven-sent excuse for disarming the population. These huge statues are frequently mentioned by writers of the next dynasty, and two of them were still in existence in the fourth century A.D. But though typical of the emperor's mania they were not typical of the metal-workers' art. The bronzes of the Warring States



PLATE VII. Bronze War Drum or Chu-Ko Ku. Drums of this form were so named after Chu-Ko Liang, sworn brother and adviser of the famous founder of the Shu Han dynasty, Liu Pei, whose drum of similar pattern is preserved at Ch'êng-tu, Ssü-ch'uan. Another in the British Museum is cast with the date A.D. 226, the period of the second emperor of the dynasty. This drum is about the same date or earlier. Note the frogs, probably relics of tribal totems. Height $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches. British Museum. (*See pages 59 and 126.*)



PLATE VIII. 'Ladies at their Toilet.' Painting in ink with washes of subdued colour on pale brown silk. By Ku K'ai-chih. ? Late 4th century A.D. Height of roll, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. British Museum. (See page 131.)

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epoch show a revulsion from the rigid form and 'tight' decoration of earlier Chou dynasty work. They are light, free, and graceful and seem to have affinity with Persian designs. Some of the small animal figures are specially fine and are plated with silver or gold.

This 'animal style', previously mentioned in *Bronze* connexion with the Chou dynasty, is thought to have been introduced into China through the agency of the nomadic Scyths and Hsiung-nu. The Scyths and later the Sarmatians, with whom gold had always been popular, may also have introduced this metal to *Gold* China, for it now occurs freely for the first time in Chinese art. It was used both for plating and inlaying bronze, a craft which rose to a high standard of beautiful execution during the period which followed.

For the great new empire was shortlived, and the Ch'in dynasty collapsed with the death of 'The First Emperor' only twenty years after his enthronement. Again the barbarous practice of immolation, attacked but not killed by Confucius, reared its head. In the colossal mausoleum they constructed for Shih Huang Ti thousands of workmen were buried alive, together with all the imperial concubines who had not borne male children. Once more China was plunged into war, and the Hsiung-nu hordes poured over the Great Wall carrying death and destruction through the land.

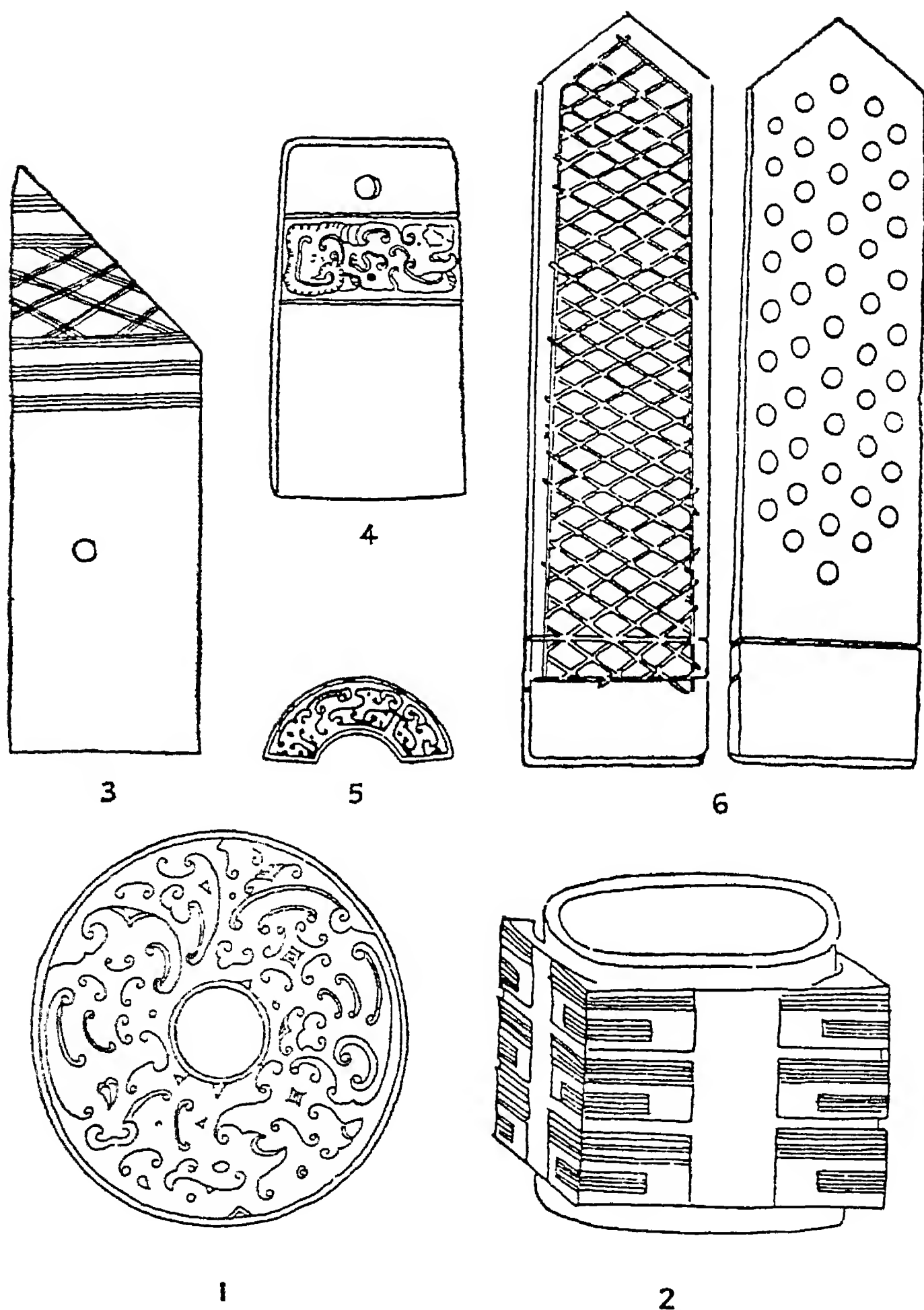
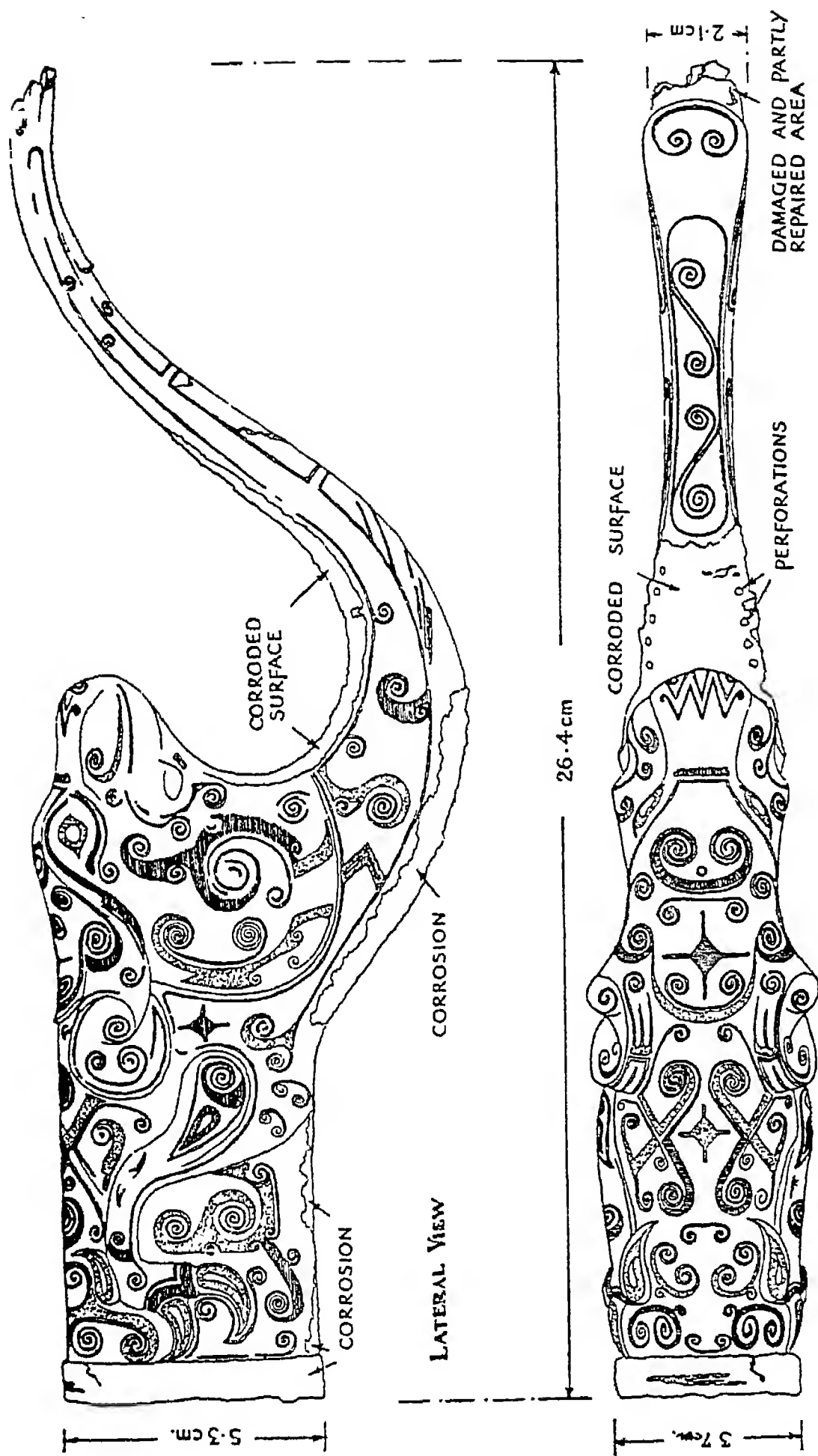


FIG. 6. A CHINESE DRAWING OF ANCIENT JADE SYMBOLS
 (See page 66.) (For description see List of Illustrations.)

From R. Wilhelm, *A Short History of Chinese Civilization*. By permission of Messrs. Bruckmann (Munich) and Messrs. George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd. (London).



VIEW LOOKING DOWN.

DOTTED AREA • SILVER.

HATCHED • • GOLD.

DRAWN FROM THE ORIGINAL

BY

O. H. Bedford

FIG. 7. INLAID BRONZE FINIAL (CHARIOT FITTING)

Said to have come from the Piao Tombs, near Chin-ts'un, Honan. ? End of Chou dynasty.
(See page 81.) British Museum. Measured and drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

IV

THE WESTERN HAN DYNASTY, 206 B.C.—A.D. 25

THE AUTUMN WIND¹

By WU-TI (157-87 B.C.), sixth emperor of the Han dynasty. He came to the throne when he was only sixteen. In this poem he regrets that he is obliged to go on an official journey, leaving his mistress behind in the capital. He is seated in his state barge surrounded by his ministers.

AUTUMN wind rises: white clouds fly.
Grass and trees wither: geese go south.
Orchids all in bloom: chrysanthemums smell sweet.
I think of my lovely lady: I never can forget.
Floating-pagoda boat crosses Fēn River.
Across the mid-stream white waves rise
Flute and drum keep time to sound of the rowers' song;
Amidst revel and feasting, sad thoughts come;
Youth's years how few! Age how sure!

Liu Pang, the founder of the Han dynasty, was a native of the southern state of Ch'u. He was thus the third semi-foreigner in succession to establish his House as dominant over all China, for *The Revival of Learning* the Chou had originally come from the west and so had the House of Ch'in. Under the Han the Hsiung-nu were driven back into the north, and culture once more spread and flourished. Led by the literati, the people took part in a spring-like revival of the national spirit. Some of the ancient writings and records which had escaped 'the burning of the books' were unearthed from their hiding-places in walls or underground pits, and the teaching and example of

¹170 *Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley (Constable & Co. Ltd.), p. 48.

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Confucius held sway again. But though the feudal system was revived for a time and scholarship was held in honour, the cleavage in the continuity of art development could not be bridged. Fortunately for the artist the break with cramping convention had been made once and for all, and new influences had brought new ideas and materials which were not lightly to be given up.

Liu Pang proved to be an outstanding soldier, statesman, and organizer. The empire pushed its boundaries even beyond the furthest limits controlled by Shih Huang Ti, and, following this expansion, in later years embassies and trade missions set out overland or in fleets of junks till ultimately they reached the Persian Gulf and the Roman Empire. In all these new enterprises and changing ways perhaps the most immovable customs were those relating to the burial of the dead. As there are now many well-known tombs of the period in which the design and funerary furniture give an illuminating picture of contemporary life, a brief description of them will be given before any attempt is made to trace individual developments in the various crafts. *Tombs*

The general plan and mode of construction of the earlier Chou tombs probably differed considerably from the late Chou and Han types, for even these varied in size and shape. But though the earlier tombs have not survived, fragments both of bronze armour and of chariots recovered from their ruins show that

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the burial customs persisted. Cowries and other shells, shell ornaments, bronze clapperless bells, and bronze vessels for food and drink have been found in tombs of widely differing dates, but the sacrificial vessels were usually kept in temples or in sacrificial chambers separate from the tomb-chamber. The more important of the later graves generally yield relics of immolation. In addition to chariots and accoutrements the chieftain's chariot horses, with other animals brought to the burial, were interred in separate pits near by. (See Fig. 7.) One well-preserved example had an inclined road, tunnelled from ground-level down to the doorway of the coffin chamber. This main chamber was formed first by making a deep excavation and laying on the bottom a foundation of stone slabs. On this was constructed an extremely solid floor, walls, and roof, made of squared baulks of timber. The whole was then covered with alternate layers of pebbles and charcoal filled in up to the level of the ground and finally mounded over with earth. The coffin occupied the centre of the chamber, the timber-lined interior had niches for grave objects and was coated with lacquer and decorated with a frieze in fresco, while the entrance was given a simple but dignified stone porch with columns resting on iron bases. The Chinese believed that the universe comprised Heaven (the male principle) and Earth (the female principle), and that the human being was an integral part of this universe. In every soul were

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merged two lives (analogous to the conceptions *animus* and *anima*). The male principle of the universe provided the spiritual half which at death returned to Heaven: the female principle provided the other half which was restored to Earth to hover round the tomb in which the body had been laid. The tomb therefore was regarded as the spirit's earthly home and nothing which might be needed was forgotten: the mourners ensured their own comfort by providing for the comfort of their dead. Many tombs were eventually grouped in one large enclosure and surrounded by earthworks pierced with occasional gateways. So in that place arose a city of the dead, where each tomb was provided with its own complete entourage and furniture and its own subterranean road. But though reminiscent of ancient Egyptian practice, these customs actually differed in many ways, particularly as there was no attempt to preserve the physical body by embalming. Red pigment, however, was used in the coffin or upon the body from Shang-Yin times onward, and in the grave pottery of the earlier Yang Shao era, and this custom may have had some connexion with the red-burials which are a feature of prehistoric graves in many parts of the world.

The objects recovered from the late Chou, Ch'in, and early Han tombs are extraordinarily beautiful. In the bronzes and small carved jade emblems and badges of rank the free and natural artistic expression associated with the period is specially noticeable. The

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little models, only a few inches high, of male and female retainers give an idea of the costumes of the period. One of them wears a gown belted and clasped with the typical girdle-hook, showing in miniature a form in use down to the present day. Actual examples of these girdle-hooks were also found, graceful arcs of bronze inlaid with turquoise and gold. But this is only one kind among innumerable everyday things recovered, of which a few are of special interest. They include other girdle-hooks of gold inlaid with jade and of bronze inlaid with mother-of-pearl; ivory chopsticks; delicately carved bone and ivory combs, and lacquered vessels painted in various colours in which well-known designs like the Yin and Yang (female and male symbol) and the phoenix occur with attenuated geometrical designs. Bronze two-edged swords and halberds were found; counting-beads—the forerunners of the abacus; life-like bronze miniatures of animals, and fabulous beasts of magnificent heraldic form. Then there are bronze globe-shaped, covered vessels and elliptical bowls with lids and mannikin feet; bottle-shaped bronze vases decorated sometimes with gold and silver inlay, sometimes with inset gems and coloured glass. The ‘revolving eye’ already mentioned occurs in glass of all sorts—beads, insets, plaques on bronze and gold work—while some of the finest workmanship is seen in the thin gold necklace chains and pendants.

Radiating from all these things there shines a re-

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freshing freedom, almost an abandon, in the design and enrichment revealing the revival of joy and hope in the soul of the artist. Freed from priestly oppression and the toils of inexorable tradition he threw off the fetters of mathematical exactitude and abandoned the rigid rules of archaism. Under the Chou every surface had tended to be smothered with close geometrical patterns and animal designs stylized almost beyond recognition. But now the patterns became delicate and free. Drawn upon surfaces which convey a restful effect by means of perfectly balanced passages of decoration alternating with empty spaces, strangely the resulting harmony has the quality of music. The animal ornament is still sometimes conventionalized but not involved: rather it evolves and flows out into the magnificent sweeping curves of heraldry. The rearing dragon, with his arching back and unfurling foliated tail, immediately reminds us of the lion rampant of Medieval England.

But none of these things reveal the new spirit more clearly than the exquisitely finished mirrors. *Bronze Mirrors* These small discs of bronze, the surface polished to give a reflection and the back with a pierced boss central, through which a silken cord or kerchief was looped as a handle, were probably invented in China during the Chou period. They were usually made in diameters of two and a half to ten inches. The mirrors from tombs of the third century B.C. are sometimes circular, rarely square, and their backs are decor-

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ated round the boss in designs of equal ingenuity, whether complex or simple. Often they are gay with tiny plaques of turquoise and arabesques of gold. Some of them had been carefully wrapped in silk, the remnants of which were found adhering to the once polished surface. Their presence in the tombs is explained not only by the presence of other articles of the toilet but by the ancient belief that in the darkness of the grave they alone could light the dead. This belief owed its origin to the inability of primitive peoples to distinguish between the two forms of light, one from its source, the other from a reflecting surface. Mirrors, therefore, were thought to be an actual source of light, but, like the heavenly bodies, an intermittent one.

They were used for many other purposes and were made in various forms. The beliefs of the Taoists, for instance, demanded that mirrors should collect magic dew for their rites and they were also in use as charms. Their decoration seems to have been lighter, more fantastic and quite unlike the ornament usually found on other bronzes. In the Han dynasty this enrichment tended more and more to become strictly symmetrical—a series of concentric bands of simple geometrical designs. These are somewhat dull in effect when compared with the naturalistic animal forms of earlier mirrors or the interlacing vine and lively squirrels and birds playing amongst the leaves which characterize the later.

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The colour too varies considerably. Some are almost black, others are silvered or are actually made of silver, but few are inlaid with turquoise and similar stones except the early types of about 200 B.C. After this time also the square and octagonal shapes seem to have fallen into disuse.

Even at the present day 'spirit mirrors' can be purchased. Their reflection thrown upon a wall shows weird effects of shadow and light. But it has been suggested that 'spirits' had less to do with the phenomenon than the minute irregularities in the planes of the mirror's polished surface. In a very old mirror these might have been caused, after hundreds of years of polishing, through the pressure imprinting in vague outline on the surface the form of the raised decoration at the back. Yet any one who has seen the reflections from one of these 'spirit mirrors' can well sympathize with the name the Chinese have given to them.

The recognized principles of bronze-working had already been laid down. The *Chou li*, the famous code of State institutions, presumably had its origin in the Chou dynasty, but its present form was *Alloys* a later compilation. The section dealing with the composition of alloys may not, therefore, be authentic.

Mr. A. J. Koop,¹ Keeper of the Department of Metalwork in the Victoria and Albert Museum, con-

¹I am indebted to Mr. A. J. Koop for permission to quote his views on attributions and patination.

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siders that we still have no reliable records of the alloy proportions in use from period to period. And further, that the number of dated specimens available is, as yet, too insignificant to warrant an attempt at investigation by chemical analysis. In spite of the fact that the *Chou li* gives the proportions of copper and tin to be used in making bells and cauldrons, axes, halberds, swords, and writing-knives and other things, the fact remains that the surface appearance and style of the bronze is still the best, though admittedly a fallible, guide to its antiquity. The various forms and colours of patination of course help the expert to assess the age of a piece, but this evidence is also vague and unreliable. It can do no more than tell us an approximate period before which the piece was probably made. It cannot give a sure clue to even an approximate date.

Especially interesting is the *Chou li* reference to the writing-knife. This may refer to the pointed metal instrument or stylus used for inscribing on bamboo tablets the traditional ideographic script; on the other hand, those which have survived are curved, and it has been suggested that they were scrapers used for erasing.

It is clear from the above that empirical knowledge (but not a science) of metallurgy had progressed very far even in these early times. The absence of references to zinc, nickel, or antimony seems to indicate that traces of these metals went unrecognized because,

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since they always occurred in the copper ore mined in China, the craftsmen had never seen either literally pure copper or the other elements in a free state.¹ They merely recognized that the copper mined in different districts had slightly differing colours (given by the presence of varying proportions of these impurities) and they therefore classed it as red, white, or grey-green. The probabilities are that the red was a naturally nearly pure copper, the white had a larger proportion of nickel, and the grey-green of tin.

Patina, that bluish-green bloom encrusting the surface of the more ancient bronzes, should have a chapter to itself. Briefly it is an efflorescence *Patina* caused by the corrosion of the metallic surface during the course of centuries of time. The variation in its colouring is due to all sorts of fortuitous circumstances—the composition of the alloy, contact with other metals, with water, or with the differing chemical constituents in the differing kinds of earth in which the bronze may have lain. The more recent incrustations appear on the bronze face usually as a scattered mottling of bluish flecks like the bloom of a grape. The oldest (according to Chinese belief) is cherry red, which, often combined with malachite green and yellow, covers the entire surface of the most ancient bronzes. Patination, though an accidental after-effect, frequently heightens the aesthetic attraction of a piece, and its supposed guarantee of age used to

¹See J. G. Andersson, *op. cit.*

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add a practical appeal to the connoisseur. But the Chinese themselves have valued, scrutinized, and classified patinated bronze over a period of many centuries. As a natural result, fakers of antiques have discovered the most ingenious methods of mimicking this delightful defect so that nowadays the discriminating collector must often call in the scientist to help him to make a final decision. Many forgeries, however, are easily exposed because their foundation is a paint which is softer than the hard incrustation of patina.

The Chinese seem to value most the black patina of bronzes which have acquired this surface not by long burial in the ground but after many hundreds of years of preservation in ancient collections of antiquities. But in the West the coloured patination of the excavated pieces remains the most popular type, in spite of the fact that it is often most ingeniously faked.

The possible influence of the Scyths on the 'animal style' of decoration developed under the Chou has long been a problem. But the somewhat changed form of the animal style which is associated with the Ch'in and early Han periods also seems to owe much to influences from these races, the Scyths and their little-known neighbours. Before this time gold seems to have been unknown in China, and as these races used it freely (vast quantities of their metalwork are still preserved in Russia) it seems likely that it was through them the metal and knowledge of its aesthetic

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possibilities first reached China. Moreover it seems fair to assume that both the new form of animal style and the precious metal were introduced into China chiefly through the activities of the Ch'in. For, as we have seen, the region they occupied extended into the north-west and embraced the approach to the desert gateway to northern and central Asia. These tracts of Asia were roamed by the Hsiung-nu, Huns, and other nomadic tribes whose territory was a sort of clearing-house and through whose agency the animal style spread through Siberia, Russia, and northern Europe. Striking testimony to the truth of this theory has been found in the tombs of northern Mongolia attributed to the first or second century B.C. From this site come the oldest examples of textiles, comprised in the finds of the now famous Kozlów expedition. Dr. Kozlów and other Russian archaeologists discovered well-preserved examples of embroidered carpets, Chinese silk damasks, and a great variety of coloured lacquer, metalwork in gold and bronze and *Textiles* craft-work of other kinds. All these things testify to the extraordinary freedom of intercourse among the peoples of northern Asia at this date. (See Fig. 8.)

Of about the same date are the silk weavings recovered by Sir Aurel Stein from a cemetery site in the Lop desert in Chinese Turkistan. Later in this chapter Pliny's account of the excellence of Chinese iron is quoted and it will be noticed that his name for the Chinese was 'the Seres'. From this evolved the word

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Serica—Seric (or silk) clothing—since silk was the chief article of trade brought all the way from China across Asia to Rome. This 'silk road' was opened up late in the second century B.C. and the above-mentioned remains of very early silk weavings were unearthed from a tomb site at a point where the road passes through Chinese Turkistan. They probably date from the first century B.C. and they are therefore more or less contemporary with the textiles—quilted rugs and silk damasks—recovered from the Mongolian tombs. In design also these finds resemble each other. The ornament illustrates even more clearly than the decoration on bronzes the extraordinary survival for over two thousand years of such *motifs* as the horseman at the flying gallop, the dragon, heraldic beasts in procession and animal ornament of various kinds, geometrical and floral patterns, and the cloud scroll. Respect for tradition and the symbolic meaning of these forms accounts for their persistence, and it is evident that they occurred throughout the next four hundred years although well-preserved examples have so far not been found. It is not, therefore, until the seventh century A.D., during the T'ang dynasty, that sufficient material is available again to enable a description of textile art to be continued. From another tomb site, this time in Corea, approximately dated to late in the first century B.C., have come a large number of lacquered vessels beautifully decorated and bearing strong resemblance to the earlier



PLATE IX. 'Winged Dragon.' (Artist unknown.) Wall-painting of the 6th century
from a tomb in Corca. (*See pages 133 and 134.*)



PLATE X. Colossal Rock-cut Buddha Image at the Yün-Kang Cave-shrines. Northern Wei period. Note the man standing on the Buddha's hand. (*See page 150.*)

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find in northern Mongolia. Hundreds of years must have gone to the shaping of a technique as delicate and perfect as these models of craftsmanship display. For it is a technique which does not seem to have been often excelled, except in the field of ceramics, until well over a thousand years later.

Though the mural paintings of the time have perished there is clear evidence of their nature in written record. *Painting*

An early Chinese historian wrote of the early painter-poets and the beginnings of painting: 'When they could not express their thoughts (in painting) they made characters, and when they could not express shapes (in writing) they made paintings.' This attitude is repeated again and again by other Chinese writers. In other words it meant that they had two languages. Just as at one time at the Court of England what was not readily expressed in English might be spoken in French, so it was with the two arts of the brush in China, and in the same way one language was partly derived from the other. As the earliest known paintings date from the second century of our era and as they show a finished technique and are not in any sense archaic it follows that the art of painting must have been practised in China for hundreds of years before that time. The scenes depicted by the painter in the palace of Prince Liu Yü, Duke of Lu in Shantung, 154-129 B.C. (the Ling-Kuang palace) were described by the poet Wang Yên-shou as follows:

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'Heaven and Earth, strange spirits of the sea, gods of the hills, the five dragons with joined wings, Fu Hsi with his scaly body, Nü Wo with serpent limbs, Huang Ti, and the great Yü; furthermore the Three Kings and many riotous damsels and turbulent lords, loyal knights, dutiful sons, mighty scholars and faithful wives.'¹

Paintings of the same kind decorated the interiors of the more imposing tombs. Nothing remains of these, but fortunately their type is known because it was the custom to transmit records of famous paintings by carving copies in stone. The famous second-century bas-reliefs from Shantung are good examples. They are more valuable as representations of lost mural paintings than as examples of sculpture. No doubt the stone reliefs were at times intended to be mural decorations in their own right, for some still retain traces of the pigments with which they were coloured. But later many were used and many more are still in use for taking impressions with ink on soft paper, so that numbers of reproductions in black and white were taken off in much the same way as collectors in our day have taken rubbings of English medieval brasses. Painted copies of mural decorations were perhaps also made on silk and paper, although Chinese histories do not record the use of paper before the first century A.D., and probably the now common scroll paintings did not become popular before then.

¹*A History of Early Chinese Painting*, Osvald Sirén, Medici Society.

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Other records on stone were made not by raising the figures in relief but by carving out and engraving into the surface of the stone, while still others are in the form of large bricks with the figures stamped or engraved. All these representations show little attempt at perspective or the suggestion of space and depth. The figures are generally in profile and the simplest methods are employed to indicate the clash or combination of groups, but the drawing is exact and full of life and rhythm. The subjects depicted were still largely legendary, Taoist fables and old tales of heroism being especially popular. (See Fig. 10.)

Gradually the custom grew of painting portraits of great men of the past. Towards the end of the Western Han dynasty and throughout the Eastern Han this phase persisted, and the patron of the arts, Ming Ti, is the chief among many emperors of the latter dynasty who, so history relates, commissioned paintings of Confucius and his disciples and other famous figures. It is, again, to versions cut in stone that knowledge of this portrait style is due. The precision and delicacy of line with which every essential is expressed, whether the softness and volume of drapery or the character shown in a face, is remarkable: remarkable too is the expressive absence of this line where a less talented artist would have added the obvious and unnecessary. Though linear in method the final effect is of a Giottesque mass and grandeur. These copies in stone are conclusive evidence of the mastery of sensitive brush-

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work which the painters of the lost originals had already achieved. But though the paintings have gone it is still possible to judge their quality of colour from the very beautiful pieces of painted lacquer which have been discovered in tombs of the period, both those mentioned above in northern Corea, which in the Han dynasty was a part of China, and elsewhere. Birds, animals, and human figures occur in these examples and the characteristically free and nervous line is enriched by the range of extremely delicate colours of the time.

The buildings which were decorated by these paintings, carpets, silk hangings, gold and silver, *Architecture* bronze and lacquer-work, are known through the records in literature, but no ruins of palaces and temples have come down to us. The written accounts show that they were founded on the models left by Shih Huang Ti, but their huge scale could not guarantee their survival, since both in substance and constructional form they were inevitably perishable. No satisfactory reason has been given for the age-long Chinese preference for impermanent timber over the stone and brick of the monumental architecture found in every other great civilization. Stone was not scarce and the Chinese were as expert at firing brick as they were in making pottery, yet timber was preferred for all but great engineering works like bridges, towers, and military defences. Even the walled city was actually protected by earthworks which only later were encased

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with a façade of brickwork. The same thing was true of the Great Wall of China. Its bricks are found to bear the seals of later emperors, for the rampart of Shih Huang Ti was throughout most of its length a colossal earthen embankment which, with its slopes filled in, still forms the core of the later brick and battlemented wall. It was thus, too, that the Roman Emperor Hadrian threw up his breastwork across Britain as a defence against the Picts: the stone revetment was completed by Severus although the whole was (and its ruin still is) known as Hadrian's wall. The above-mentioned Shantung bas-reliefs show two or three examples of architecture which strongly resemble traditional modern forms, with the notable exception that the slopes of the low-pitched tiled roofs are straight, not gently concave as in later times. However, overhanging wood-bracketed eaves are indicated, as well as widely spaced wood columns. (See Fig. 10.) No doubt the ever-popular rammed earth was also in use in Han times, especially as the foundation platform often extended to form a terrace surrounding the buildings. Brick and stone facings would be used here, and stone, bronze, or iron bases were put down for the columns. But the superposed structure was all of wood. A series of bays, formed with ranks of tall timber posts reaching to the roof and more or less equidistant from each other, were connected lengthwise by wood lintels and transversely by the horizontal roof beams. Above these came the roof-

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timbers, rafters, and tiles. Small wonder that in course of erection a Chinese building resembles at one time a forest of masts and at another a Gargantuan game of spillikins. The bays of columns stand free without cross bracing and the roof beams have no diagonal struts. When covered with heavy earthenware tiles the whole of this framework stands on its wooden stilts and is held down solely by the weight of its roof and an undue reliance on Providence. Since there are no struts, braces, or buttresses to counteract diagonal movement the rectangular framing is likely to collapse lengthways in a hurricane or a slight earthquake unless it is burnt to the ground in a fire. If it escapes these mischances, eventually the wood carcase will rot unless kept continually in repair. Yet the Chinese remained satisfied with such primitive, vulnerable structures and even added to their risks by using wood panelling generally for internal partitions and often for external walls. This explains the total disappearance of all the great buildings of a date prior to our era and of the great majority constructed during the next fifteen hundred years. In the temples of Greece and Rome the masonry has survived to some extent the attacks of time, of fire, and of armies crazed with fear or conquest, but the timber-pillared halls of coeval Chinese civilization scarcely survived from dynasty to dynasty.

There are many ingenious reasons put forward to account for this extraordinary preference for tempor-

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ary building materials. One explains that they were cheaper and easier to procure as well as easier to build with. This is true of rammed earth, which had the additional advantage of being a very ancient and well-tried mode of building. At first sight timber also seems to answer to this description, but as a matter of fact trees sufficiently large to convert into columns (for any but small buildings) were scarce, and their transport was expensive. Probably, however, the custom of using posts and beams of wood developed gradually in early days and the technique of jointing and erection improved slowly, keeping pace for a time with the modest degree of accommodation required in a primitive community. But with the vast building schemes of Shih Huang Ti and the palaces of the Han emperors the demand for loftiness and wide-spanned spaces must have over-taxed the forest resources of the new empire. Yet, in spite of this, wood remained the favourite building material.

The Han period was noteworthy for a revival of learning and the growth of lexicography, poetry, calligraphy and painting, besides the development in the crafts of the lacquer- and metal-worker, the potter, and the weaver. All these activities were aided by a freer communication with western civilizations, due largely to the travels of the celebrated Chinese envoy Chang Ch'ien at the end of the second century B.C. They are recorded by the great Chinese historian of the time,

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Ssü-ma Ch'ien, 'The Herodotus of China'. While Chang Ch'ien failed in his original mission to conclude an alliance with the Indo-Scyths he brought back news of the countries of western Asia, especially of Hellenized regions such as north-east Bactria and Ferghāna. Through his agency the grape-vine was introduced into China and though at this date it does not occur in art, it appears a few hundred years later. But another important discovery he made in Ferghāna was that of the so-called Supernatural Horses (reported to be of a blood-sweating breed) which were so superior in size, grace, and fleetness to the native pony of Mongolia that the Emperor Wu immediately coveted them. They were eventually introduced in great numbers and a record of their Grecian nobility of form is preserved in many representations, the chief occurring in the pottery models from Han and later tombs. But there are beautiful examples also in stone and in jade, all of which emphasize a character which can be called Western rather than Chinese and which strikes the least informed beholder. These horses are said to have been the first ancestors of those cavalry squadrons, which, it is known, gradually supplanted the less mobile chariots, so that with superior mounted forces the Chinese finally defeated the Hsiung-nu single-handed. In 121 B.C. the young general Ho Chü-p'ing had achieved the last of several victories, but he died in the same hour. Guarding his great tomb in the Wei valley still stand

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the stone sculpture groups showing a horse trampling on a barbarian.¹ (See Plate IV.)

Although to some degree, then, Wu succeeded, yet the outstanding result of the colossally wasteful military expeditions he sent against Ferghāna was the freeing of lines of communication and the opening up of trade with western civilizations. Imports from the Roman Empire, and especially from Syria, included glass, although this material, as stated previously, may also have been made independently in China at the end of the Chou dynasty. It has even been suggested that the similarity of the typical green lead glaze of Han pottery with Egyptian glazed ware argues that the latter also was imported by the Chinese. But this does not seem likely, for other Egyptian glazes and the technique of enamelling stone do not appear. The Chinese method of studding bronzes with gem-like insets of glass or scooping out hollows and engraving lines for an inlay of coloured lacquers (but not glass enamels) continued. In enamelling, the barbarian Celts in Britain seem to have forestalled the Chinese in discovering the technique of 'pouring colours upon heated brass which adhere and become as hard as stone'—as runs the Roman record of the early years of our era. The exports from China to the Roman Empire included silk and iron. The latter seems to have maintained a successful competition with the

¹*An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture*, Leigh Ashton (Ernest Benn Ltd.).

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local product, for as late as A.D. 77 Pliny wrote in his *Natural History*: 'But of all the different kinds of iron, the palm of excellence is awarded to that which is made by the Seres.' ('The Seres' was the name given by the Romans to the Chinese.)¹ Pliny's testimony is borne out by the large objects of finely made cast iron of this period, in particular a well-preserved cooking stove, which have been found in Han tombs.

The successful campaign against Ferghāna to secure the Supernatural Horses set out across Asia
Introduction of Buddhism in 102 B.C. By the desert route thus opened up Buddhism entered China exactly a hundred years later. The year 2 B.C. is usually recognized as the auspicious year, but there are other legends current. One states that two hundred years before, Shih Huang-ti had imprisoned an itinerant Buddhist missionary. Another tells that a hundred years later some golden statues of the Buddha were looted from the Hsiung-nu by Ho Chü-p'ing, the young commander of the Emperor Wu's successful campaign; but these may have been figures of ancestors, for the Hsiung-nu also practised ancestor-worship. A third reference records that Buddhist doctrine was preached in 6 B.C., but disbelieved. Yet, at the capital, Buddhism was practised as an organized religion little more than fifty years later. Although it was recognized at court,

¹'Wrought Iron', Maxwell Ayrton and Arnold Silcock, *Country Life*, 1929, p. 3.

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it did not make great headway at first, and its influence on art was negligible.

The earlier or Western Han had been a period of unparalleled imperial expansion, of foreign trade and prosperity, and of great achievements in the arts. But it closed in misfortune and chaos. The dynasty fell with the 'socialist' Wang Mang's interregnum of A.D. 9-25. Once more the dreaded nomads swept down and dismembered the central Asian possessions of the Han.

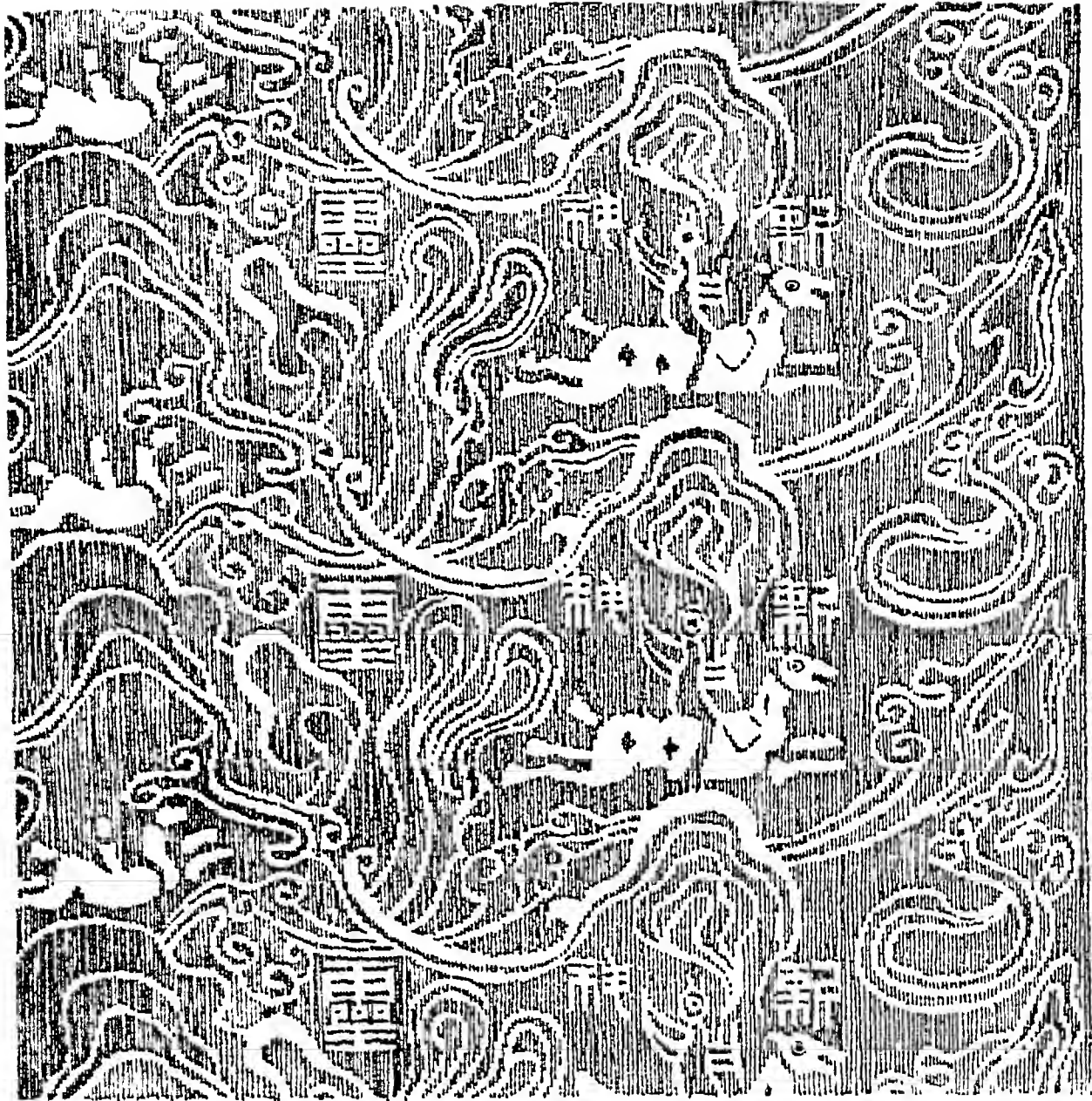


FIG. 8. TEXTILE: SILK DAMASK

Fragment of Silk Damask with Taoist decorative motives of the Han period, woven in green and buff on a red ground, recovered by the Kozlov Expedition in Mongolia. Specimen of the earliest surviving examples of Chinese silk industry and textile art. ? 2nd century B.C. (*See pages 95 and 96.*) Drawn from the original by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

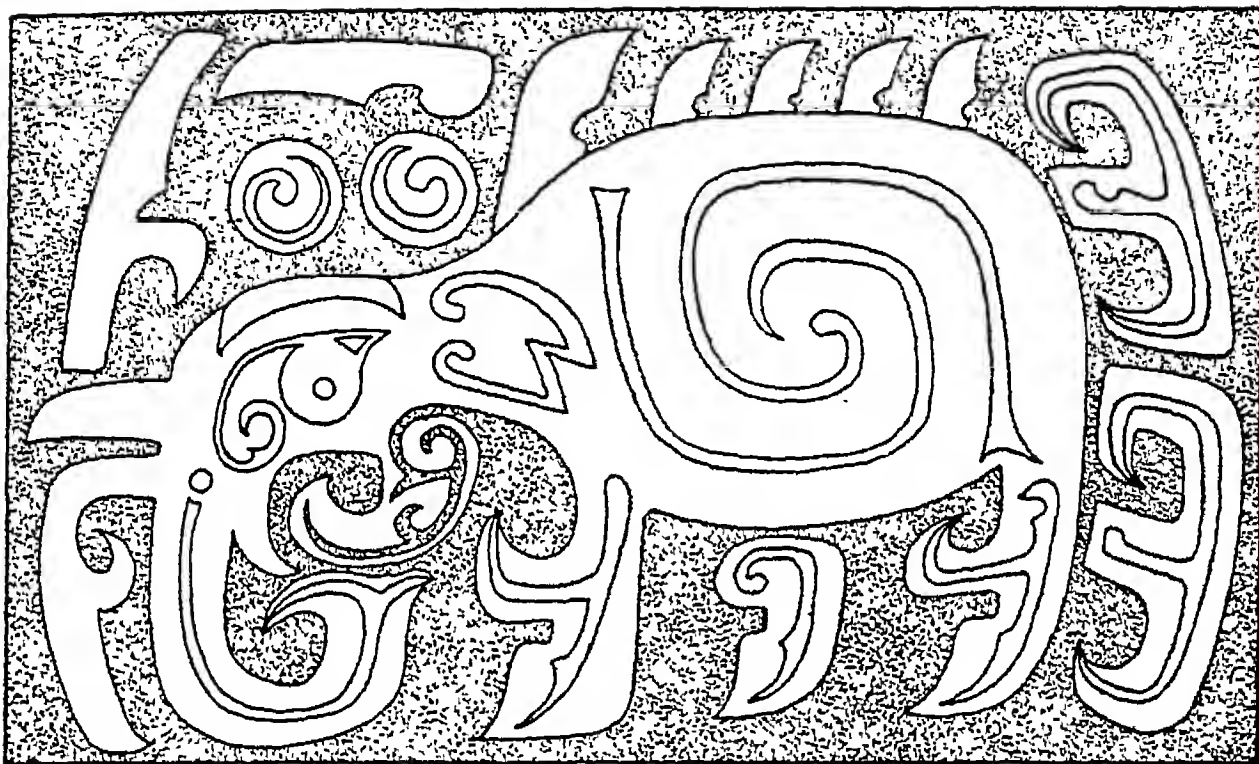


FIG. 9. STYLISTED REPRESENTATION OF AN ELEPHANT, FROM A BRONZE IN THE EUMORFOPOULOS COLLECTION

Chou dynasty. (*See pages 60 and 66.*)

Drawn by Mr. O. H. Bedford.

V

EASTERN HAN DYNASTY, A.D. 25-220

DAY DREAMS¹

By Tso Ssŭ (*third century A.D.*)

WHEN I was young I played with a soft brush
 And was passionately devoted to reading all sorts of books.
 In prose I made Chia I my standard:
 In verse I imitated Ssŭ-ma Hsiang-ju.
 But then the arrows began singing at the frontier.
 And a winged summons came flying to the City.
 Although arms were not my profession,
 I had once read Jang-Chŭ's war-book.
 I shouted aloud and my cries rent the air:
 I felt as though Tung Wu were already annihilated.
 The scholar's knife cuts best at its first use.
 And my dreams hurried on to the completion of my plan.
 I wanted at a stroke to clear the Yang-tze and Hsiang,
 And at a glance to quell the Tibetans and Hu.
 When my task was done, I should not accept a barony,
 But refusing with a bow, retire to a cottage in the country.

After a period of disorder a new dynasty arose,
 styled the later, or Eastern Han. China again
 became united and successful, but it took more than
 fifty years to repair the damage to the empire
 and reconquer the states in Asia. In A.D.
 67 the Emperor Ming's envoy to the Indo-
 Scyths brought back two Buddhist priests. Other
 missionaries followed and during this dynasty the
 advocates of Buddhism slowly spread and mingled,
 in that curious spirit of phlegmatic tolerance common
 to the English and the Chinese, with the adherents
 of Taoism and Confucianism. For centuries the

¹170 *Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley (Constable), p. 66.



Single-leaf Coromandel Screen, 17th Century A.D.
Mr. S. D. Winkworth's Collection

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religions borrowed outward ritualistic forms and theological ideas from each other. In the way typical of China, she changed and then absorbed a Buddhism compatible with her pre-existing convictions.

This epoch is notable too for the developments in ceramics and in the arts of calligraphy and painting, and portrait painting was especially encouraged by the Emperor Ming. (See Fig. 11.) *Calligraphy* With the opening of this period came the invention of paper, another aid to the diffusion of these arts. Experiments were made with silk rags, bark, roots of herbs, and other substances, but whatever the type the result seems always to have been a paper unusually soft and absorbent. Both the oldest examples and the modern stuff more nearly resemble blotting-paper than the stiff, close-textured material in use in the West. This sponge-like quality must be borne in mind when judging the technical excellence of either brush-writing or the characteristic line brush-drawing which grew from it. For the absorption of the paper (and, to a less degree, of silk which still continued in use) made it impossible successfully to erase or correct a single stroke, so that each composition was first completely visualized in the imagination of the artist and then transcribed with faultless accuracy and feeling in a series of rapid brush-strokes.

In China the delicacy of hand necessary for the execution of accurate, sensitive line came naturally to the child as he learnt to draw the classic characters.

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At the same time an unconscious capacity for design and composition showed itself, for every character is a lesson in building up a design, and each grouping of characters into a poem, or indeed into a mere letter, is a display of the power of composition. And when it is remembered that each group of characters was not only an exercise in technical dexterity but a picture conveying an intrinsic meaning, poetical, ethical, or only perhaps complimentary to the reader, it is easy to account for the spiritual meaning with which the early Chinese painters charged their handiwork. In the East the foundation of the child's schooling was classical literature, noble thoughts memorized and transcribed in the beautiful ideographic script. But in the West there existed no such universal medium combining a training in art and ethics founded on the finest classical models. First of all the Chinese painter-poets were great writers—great calligraphers—and only later in time did they turn to the drawing of pictures as a medium to interpret thoughts and feelings inexpressible in words. It does not, then, seem curious to the Chinese to honour a great painter first because he is a great calligrapher—an exponent of the elder art of writing—and only second because he is an exponent of the later art of painting.

As we have seen, Indian ink, or rather what was actually the same thing, Chinese ink, was the medium, and colour was not popular. Even washes were used quite rarely in painting, and in calligraphy, of course,

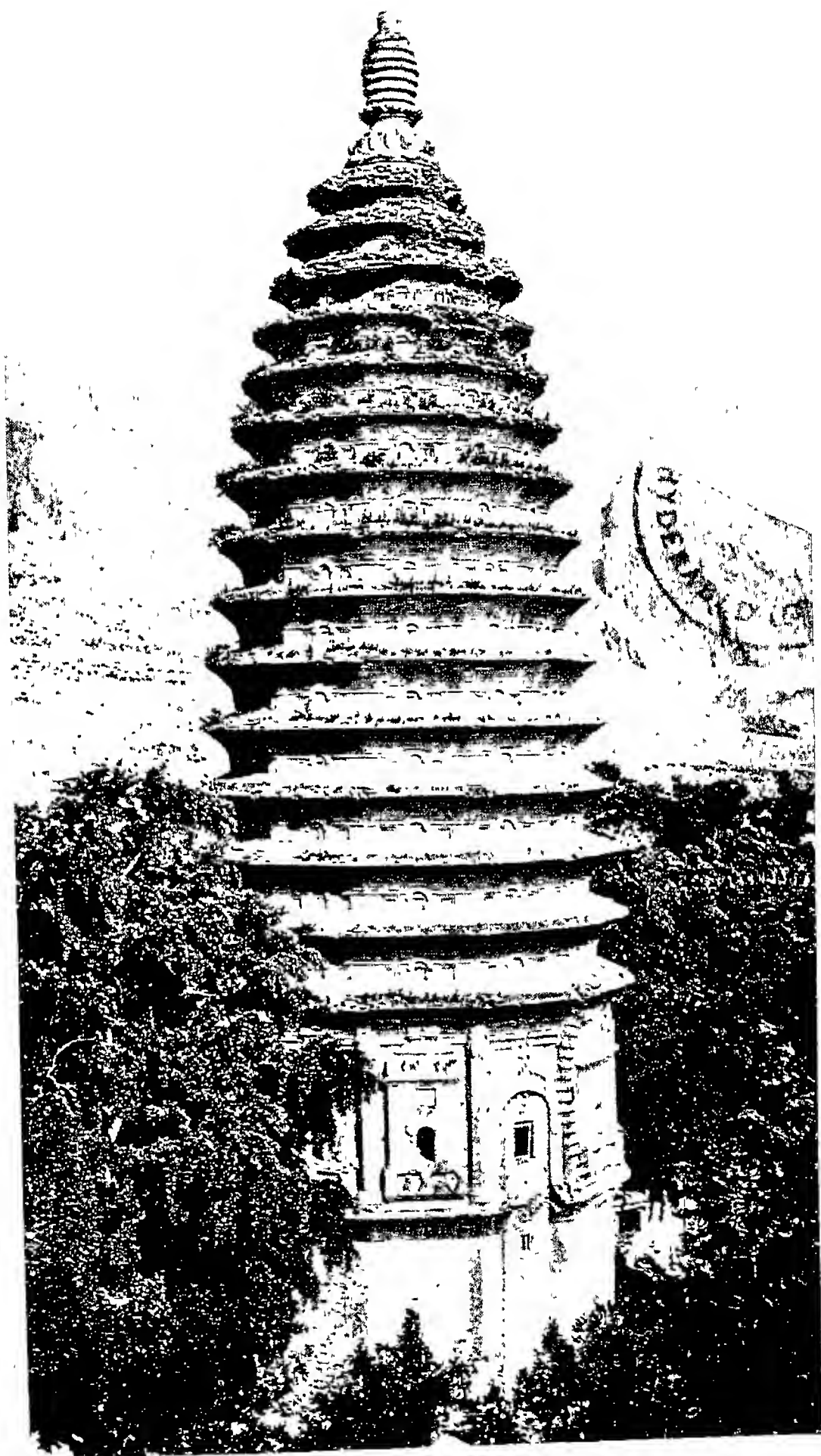


PLATE XI. Early Octagonal Pagoda at Sung Shan,
in Honan. A.D. 523. (*See page 137.*)



PLATE XII. Standing Figure of a Bodhisattva. In stone. 3 feet high. Late 6th or early 7th century. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. (*See page 160.*)

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not at all. Since Chinese paintings are literally ink drawings done with a brush, and since the technique developed from writing with a brush, the result is an art of line. Both arts imply absolute mastery of brushwork, and the finest drawings can express action, space, and volume by means of line alone. In examples where colours are used they are generally washes light in tone and sparingly applied, chosen chiefly with an eye to their reinforcement of the all-essential line. Neither does light and shade cloud the effect, for Chinese art ignores shadows, and tricks of high light contrasted with darkness have never disturbed its serenity. Few masters of European painting disclose a similar approach to their art except perhaps Botticelli. His 'Birth of Venus', for instance, displays a Chinese harmony of flowing line enhanced by subdued yet subtle colouring which is rare in the West. On the other hand the work of Rembrandt, rich in colour, dazzling in its mastery of chiaroscuro, offers the most striking contrast with the paintings of the Far East. In the West painting became enslaved to the habit of representing things as they are seen by the eye, but in the East it began by expressing thoughts which the painter-poet could not convey by the written word, and so became the art of presenting things which are invisible except to the eye of the soul.

Chinese painting, therefore, was always a medium for the communication of ideas, and as such it was a natural development from picture writing, the earliest

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mode of recording ideas. The art of writing, which may be likened to the bud, broke into full flower with painting.

According to Chinese usage calligraphy and painting come under the heading of the fine arts, and curiously enough sculpture, bronze-work, and modeling—the plastic arts—do not. The development of writing as a fine art has already been mentioned—the early picture-writing inscriptions on tortoise-shell or bronze, &c., the Great Seal characters, the evolution of the writing-brush, the Small Seal characters, and other forms of script—but following these occurred a simplification in the construction of the characters during the Han dynasty. Already in the first two or three centuries of our era there were famous calligraphists whose names have been handed down to later generations. One of them, named T'sai Yung, who lived in the mid-second century A.D., laid down nine rules for the art of writing called the Nine Influences, which correspond in calligraphy to the Six Canons in painting evolved later. Then came the Model Style of writing, an improvement created by one of the most famous calligraphists, Wang Hsi-chih, and this, with slight variations, has been in use ever since. Mention of these modifications in the characters may have given the impression that the earlier styles soon became unintelligible to later eyes, but this is not so. Each change was slight, and from time to time the classics were transcribed in the new style.

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In the West it is difficult to trace the first steps in the evolution of writing owing to the revolutionary changes brought about by the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet and the continuous impact of fresh influences in the crowded Mediterranean world. In China, however, there was no revolutionary change. The language never became alphabetic, nor were modifications drastically or continuously imposed by foreign nations. The characters, which are only symbols or a combination of symbols representing things or ideas, were slightly changed in appearance but kept their original meanings. In exactly the same way the words in European languages were slightly changed in appearance through the invention of printing, but kept their original meanings. So the student who lived in China in the brush and ink age could still understand the writings of the great masters of literature who lived centuries before his time. This is why Chinese characters are such a perfect medium for what Lionel Giles has called 'the hiving of thought'. Again, wood-block printing was invented in China long before the process was discovered in Europe, but once more the form of the characters remained with almost no change. It is, therefore, perfectly true to say that the Chinese have always had an endless store of wisdom readily available from the earliest times to the present day. Moreover, as the written language was not subject to the changes which occur in alphabetic languages, it remained and unified the whole

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nation. For all men could understand each other through the medium of writing even when differences in spoken dialects made conversation impossible. A practically unchanging ideographic script has been the chief factor in the preservation of the body of Chinese culture. Other factors were China's geographical vastness and comparative isolation, the sense of stability engendered by the balanced and moral conception of the universe within which the patriarchal system and the theory of government which grew from it were encompassed. During the Han dynasty this stability was further emphasized by the social system, for the community was divided into two main classes, a vast scattered population of free peasant landowners controlled by local groups of cultured officials with the emperor as supreme head.

Pottery The craft of the potter had not as yet found full expression. The honoured position held by the highly developed craft of bronze-working overshadowed all the plastic arts so that they were too apt to strive after an imitation of the forms and even the colours of bronze. None the less the potters were astonishingly successful within these self-imposed limitations, which seem to have had for their object the delusion of their patrons into mistaking a pot for its bronze counterpart. Thus, the original parts played by these two materials were now completely reversed: whereas archaic bronzes imitated earlier pottery forms, now pottery imitated bronze. The

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beginnings of this tendency occur in the Chou period and they were noted in Chapter III. On earthenware the only glazes were brown and green. Bottle-shaped vases, often painted, and mimicking the bronze vases recovered from early Han tombs, are commonly found. (See Plate III.) So are the types known as the hill censers and hill jars. (See Plate V.) These owe their origin to the Taoist fable of the Isles of the Blest, the sea-encircled mountains on which dwelt those who had attained immortality. As far back as the time of Shih Huang Ti this fable had so entranced the Chinese imagination that he sent a magician with a fleet of ships to search for these islands. Then the great emperor of the Western Han, Wu Ti, became an ardent believer, and later his example was followed by rulers in this, the Eastern Han, period. The hill censers had covers made to represent one of the mountainous islands with waves washing the base. A perforated cover allowed the incense-smoke to escape and the lower portion was a plain unglazed censer bowl, generally raised on a slender stem with a saucer-shaped foot. This, it is thought, was intended to heighten the effect of a mountain surrounded by water. As with other pottery, the usual material was a buff or a cinder-grey earthenware either plain or with a green lead glaze enriching the more important surfaces. The green was provided by some compound of copper and, while the glaze is of a beautiful, iridescent brilliancy, yet this very perfection only

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serves to emphasize the fact that the potters of the time could not (or at least did not) make any colours except brown, brownish-green, and green. The decorative *motifs* run largely to vigorously executed hunting scenes, horses at the 'flying gallop', and archers on horseback, some of which represent combats in which the enemy troops wear the Scythian high-peaked cap and riding costume. It is obvious that, following the introduction of the Supernatural Horses, chariots had fallen into disuse and the new mounted squadrons had become as important in war as mounted hunters had always been in the chase. The methods of applying the ornament were first to press the clay into moulds, the sunken designs of which afterwards stood out in relief on the surface of the ware; or to impress strips with decoration separately and attach them to the ware later; or merely to stamp them.

But besides the typical examples already mentioned there are quantities of pottery objects recovered from graves which show little or no resemblance to bronze forms. These include models of hunting and watch dogs and of all sorts of household utensils and fittings from ovens to well-heads. Much has been learnt from them concerning the daily life of the time, and it has even been possible to reconstruct with the aid of such finds the typical farmstead with its courtyards, buildings, implements, and animals. The Chinese say that the first true porcelain was made during this period, but while some examples of porcellaneous

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wares may date from the second century A.D. definite proof is wanting. It is true, however, that wares *in the style* of Han art and with most of the characteristics of porcelain have been found, so that the gradual discovery of the technique was obviously progressing more rapidly by the end of the Eastern Han epoch. It is equally obvious that previous evolution had been exceedingly slow. Different types evolved in different epochs and then died out, and during the course of hundreds of years some of these types approached in their technical characteristics those of true porcelain. One thing is certain, namely that porcelain was not the invention of one man but the unexpected culmination of generations of effort to produce merely a harder and finer sort of glazed earthenware. Towards the close of the Eastern Han period this fine ware had so improved that for the first time it was given a special name to distinguish it from the softer, coarser pottery. The new name was *tz'ü*. At first it merely designated these finer wares, and as their quality gradually improved the name continued to be applied to them. So when the potters' efforts were crowned with complete success in the seventh century A.D. the same word *tz'ü* came at last to mean true porcelain also, and it is still used for all porcellaneous wares at the present day. The qualities ultimately perfected were a hard, thin ware with which a transparent coat of glaze would combine to produce a lustrous, smooth, and translucent vessel. Another quality achieved

Eastern Han Dynasty

was that the ware gave out a musical note when struck. None of these characteristics were perfected by the Han potters, but they did achieve a remarkable degree of hardness, thinness, and transparency of glazing over an opaque body. The chemical constituents of these wares prove to be almost identical with those of porcelain and they exhibit a new grey-green glaze.

In the meantime the art of the painter, unlike that of the potter, was rapidly developing. The *Painting* primitive period, in which the artist was evidently reluctant to attempt perspective or the depiction of figures except in a side view, was soon superseded. At the close of the Eastern Han dynasty ceremonies in which large numbers of people took part had become a popular subject. The same economy of line is noticeable, but the groups are definitely massed to form a pleasing composition. Instead of the old fear of emptiness, spaces boldly left unfilled emphasize the importance of the figures. For the first time is seen that peculiarly Chinese convention in rendering perspective, where the spectator looks down at the figures which are posed as if on an open stage. The effect of depth and perspective is obtained not by the receding lines of the plinth and cornice of an architectural setting, for these are usually entirely omitted, but in the simplest way—by the oblique outlines of a mat on which the figures are grouped, or of one or two boxes placed in the foreground. The outlines, however, do not recede to a vanishing-point,

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nor are they necessarily merely parallel, but often compromise between the two. The demand for portraits and contemporary scenes from daily life encouraged the artist to observe and record realistic expressions and gestures with a truth to nature not required in the earlier paintings of mythological subjects. He rose nobly to the occasion, and before the close of the period had developed a technique astounding in its simplicity, breadth of treatment, and modernity of feeling. The tomb paintings on a series of brick slabs which are now in the Boston Museum provide the finest examples of this supreme expression of Han art.¹ (See Plate VI.)

These drawings show the final emancipation of Han painting. No hint of a primitive art remains, though flat and simple as the most archaic relief they announce a sophistication as complete and effortless as it is dazzling. They were probably executed about A.D. 200, yet it would be difficult to find painting of similar type and date in the West superior to them. The productions of Greek art show finished perfection, but they provide no parallel with these brilliant sketches. They illustrate perfectly the mastery which tireless practice with the writing-brush conferred, and it was in the twin arts of brush-writing and brush-drawing that the latter part of the Han epoch was supreme.

Sculpture also shows considerable changes in out-

¹*A History of Early Chinese Painting*, O. Sirén, Medici Society, vol. i, p. 9.

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look, but these are due more to ideas which flowed in from Western countries than to normal aesthetic growth. The influences are seen especially *Sculpture* in the lithe, attenuated lines of animal sculpture. The heavy, archaic forms have given way to the 'flying gallop', the dragon poised for flight, and a further exaggeration of the lissom, leaping figures of heraldic beasts. The whole of Asia recognized the Han empire as paramount, and embassies with gifts and traders with rich merchandise frequently came and went. Even from Rome itself the merchants came, adding their quota to the growing knowledge of foreign products and foreign culture.

The stone reliefs from Shantung have already been referred to as copies, perhaps, of mural paintings of an earlier time, and as illustrations of a style of architecture which has prevailed ever since. They date from the first half of the second century A.D. and come from the Wu Liang tombs. Like most surviving pieces of this date they are examples of funerary sculpture, examples which give evidence of the costly funeral customs of the period. These entailed not only the provision of a stone vault, carved with panels in relief, but of columns and figures of animals set up before the tomb. The larger the tomb the more prodigal was the expenditure on these statues. The columns are often of great interest because they also show details of the wood architecture of the time done in stone, proving that the buildings in wood, which have

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long since disappeared, were constructed on principles which have persisted till the present day. A characteristic of Han sculpture is the lack of importance given to the human body. Where it occurs the figure and costume are treated as a unity, and not as an anatomical study in which the drapery indicates and emphasizes the bodily structure it veils. In reliefs, the silhouette, or in the round, the mass seems the important factor, and this, allied with imperious vigour and a scorning of meticulous truth to nature or to distracting detail, governs all the branches of glyptic art.

In spite of the rarity of contemporary examples it is evident that the four hundred years of the two Han dynasties saw a very rapid advance in evolution, although perhaps less in bronze and sculpture than in calligraphy and painting. Contact with Western civilizations was maintained for an almost unbroken period of two centuries before Christ, and two centuries after His birth. But although the empire became the paramount state in Asia it fell before internal dissension and the rapacity of rival military usurpers, who ultimately parcelled out the land between them.



FIG. 10. RECEPTION OF THE EMPEROR MU WANG BY HSI WANG MU (THE 'ROYAL MOTHER OF THE WEST' OF TAOIST LEGEND)

Mu Wang is the large figure seated below and Hsi Wang Mu, wearing a coronet head-dress, is seated on the floor above. Note typical features of Han architecture: the straight slopes of the roofs and the columns with brackets, and, above, the caryatides—carved human figures—supporting roofs. (*See pages 98, 101 and 122.*) From part of an inked squeeze of a carved stone relief of the second century A.D. (Han dynasty) from Shantung. Drawn by the Author.

VI

PERIOD OF THE THREE KINGDOMS AND THE DIVISION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

A.D. 220-536

THE DESECRATION OF THE HAN TOMBS¹

By CHANG TSAI (*third century A.D.*)

At Pei-mang how they rise to Heaven,
Those high mounds, four or five in the fields!
What men lie buried under these tombs?
All of them were Lords of the Han world.
'Kung' and 'Wên'² gaze across at each other:
The Yüan mound is all grown over with weeds.
When the dynasty was falling, tumult and disorder arose,
Thieves and robbers roamed like wild beasts.
Of earth³ they have carried away more than one handful,
They have gone into vaults and opened the secret doors.
Jewelled scabbards lie twisted and defaced:
The stones that were set in them, thieves have carried away,
The ancestral temples are hummocks in the ground:
The walls that went round them are all levelled flat.
Over everything the tangled thorns are growing:
A herd-boy pushes through them up the path.
Down in the thorns rabbits have made their burrows:
The weeds and thistles will never be cleared away.
Over the tombs the ploughshare will be driven
And peasants will have their fields and orchards there.
They that were once lords of a thousand hosts
Are now become the dust of the hills and ridges.
I think of what Yün-mên⁴ said
And am sorely grieved at the thought of 'then' and 'now'.

¹*170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley (Constable), p. 67.

²Names of two tombs.

³In the early days of the dynasty a man stole a handful of earth from the imperial tombs, and was executed by the police. The emperor was furious at the lightness of the punishment.

⁴Yün-mên said to Mêng Ch'ang-chün (died 279 B.C.), 'Does it not grieve you to think that after a hundred years this terrace will be cast down and this pond cleared away?' Mêng Ch'ang-chün wept.

Period of the Three Kingdoms and the

As we have seen, the introduction of Buddhism, which at first made little progress, had practically no influence upon the development of art throughout

The Heroic Age.

The Three Kingdoms. A.D. 220-

280, approximately

the later or Eastern Han dynasty. The

first Chinese Buddhist monk was ordained about A.D. 180, the first recorded

Buddhist temple was erected in A.D. 190,

and the Han period closed amidst the confusion of civil war in A.D. 220. In the West the third century saw the Goths, Franks, and Vandals successfully harrying the Roman Empire which till now had also enjoyed two hundred years of peace. China was similarly threatened by powerful enemies from the north, but in the south the new religion began to make great strides, especially in the state of Wu. The land was now divided into three parts and for approximately half a century the Three Kingdoms, Wei, Shu Han, and Wu flourished simultaneously.

The heroic figure of the time is Liu Pei, whose bronze war-drums at Ch'êng-tu were mentioned on page 59. (See Plate VI.) The children who play in the shade of his grave-mound, which rises above the bamboo grove beside the temple, all know the legend of the hero to whom they belonged. Liu Pei was a poor seller of straw sandals and mats, who by his genius, bravery, and steadfastness rose to be the conqueror of that country, the land of Shu, now the far western province of Ssŭ-ch'uan. In all his enterprises he was counselled and supported by a statesman, Chou-Ko

Division between North and South

Liang (whose lyre still hangs on the wall of the same temple), and by two brothers who became his trusted generals. One of these has since been deified for his valour under the name Kuan Ti, the Chinese God of War. The loyalty of these 'sworn brothers' has been the theme of epic story and the ideal of friendship ever since.

In A.D. 247 the famous priest Sêng-hui arrived and in his successful mission converted, among other distinguished persons, Ts'ao Pu-hsing, the court painter of the Wu kingdom. He and other celebrated painters of the period added a new impetus to the spread of Buddhism through the agency of their religious paintings, but none of their works has survived and many must have been destroyed in the great persecutions of Buddhism which occurred later. It is therefore impossible to evaluate the critical appreciation of later Chinese art critics. Little is known about the art of the third century owing to the confusion into which the country was plunged by anarchy and wars with the Hsiung-nu. But during this time—legend states—the first pagoda was built at Nanking, which, in later times, was also the site of the famous Porcelain Pagoda.

At the beginning of the fourth century the Hsiung-nu were defeated by the emperor of the reigning Chin dynasty, which followed the short-lived period of the Three Kingdoms. An ally, chieftain of the T'o-pa (Toba) Tartars, actually won the day and was consequently

*The Division
of North and
South, A.D.
386-589*

Period of the Three Kingdoms and the

made a minister. Later he established a kingdom. His House increased in power for three generations, when a descendant defeated the Chinese forces and declared himself emperor, taking the title Wei from the previous native dynasty of that name.

In the Western world the Roman Empire was tottering while this Tartar Empire was being established, for in A.D. 410 Alaric, king of the Visigoths, the northern barbarians of Europe, was finally victorious. In China the victors were neither so powerful nor so *The Tartar* ruthless. The T'o-pa Tartars, or Northern *Emperors* Wei, as they are now styled, came from the extreme north of Asia, the region of Lake Baikal, in Siberia, and though not entirely uncivilized they were uncouth and unlettered. It is not surprising, therefore, that they left no monuments with inscriptions in their own language, nor that they took Chinese names and adopted the culture of the people they had conquered. But it is surprising, perhaps, that under their protection arose the first and greatest school of Buddhist sculpture. The explanation is to be found in the Chinese capacity for absorbing foreign elements into their traditional culture. And, much as the sundew flower absorbs a fly, the essence only was absorbed and digested while the husk was left. This capacity seems to have grown with the centuries. The phenomenon was repeated with the Mongols, later with the Manchus, and it may well happen again. So far as the Northern Wei are concerned, they provided



PLATE XIII. Part of a Landscape Roll. After Wang Wei (8th century). Painting by Chao Mêng-fu (1254-1322) in colours on silk. Height of roll, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. British Museum. (*See page 187.*)



PLATE XIV. Lion and Prey. Carved in stone. T'ang period.
The Louvre. (*See page 169.*)

Division between North and South

little but a settled government and encouragement to the Buddhist religion. As nomads, what art they had was either primitive and applied—crafts elaborating accoutrements and costume—or borrowed from established civilizations. But their support of Buddhism released a new flood of inspiration for the native craftsmen, members of the vanquished race who yet were victors in everything but name. The prodigal expenditure on religious monuments and furniture is proved by the numbers of specimens which still survive, especially the cave-shrine, giant images of Buddha, carved from the solid rock, while the sincerity of religious feeling lives on in the serene smiling faces of their statues. There are pieces dating from A.D. 390 onwards, but owing to the ravages of time, wars, and persecutions, fourth-century examples are very rarely found. It was in the latter half of this century, however, that the construction of the first cave-shrines was begun in China. They were undertaken by the celebrated monk Lo Tsun after he had seen a vision of a thousand Buddhas, and the caves are named after this vision. Tun-Huang, China's far north-western gateway to the trade-routes across the central Asian deserts, was the site, and although the original shrine has disappeared, pilgrims and travellers have visited the other carved and painted caves for centuries. Their rich treasures are described by Sir Aurel Stein in *Serindia*, and reproductions of the paintings are given by Professor Paul Pelliot in *Les Grottes de Touen-houang*.

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Equally important are the paintings which were now being made at the other end of China, some of which have survived. The great figure of this period is Ku K'ai-chih, the most famous of the early painters whose names and works are known. He lived in the south, probably between A.D. 350 and 400. He was an artist in life as well as in paint, a man of parts, intellectual, and gifted with a great sense of humour. This quality enlivens many of his works. 'It was commonly said that K'ai-chih was a threefold genius, exceeding in wit, in painting, and in foolishness!' So runs the description of him in one of the old Chinese books. Though the school of landscape painters did not evolve until more than three hundred years later, so far as is known Ku K'ai-chih was the first to use mountains, rivers, and trees as the indispensable setting and background for some of his subjects. This is astonishing when it is remembered that a similar correlation of figures with natural scenery, as in 'The Hunter' by Ku K'ai-chih (British Museum), occurred in the West only with the Italian Renaissance. 'The Tempest' by Giorgione has been described as the forerunner of the first school of landscape painting in Europe, and Giorgione lived at the close of the fifteenth century—eleven hundred years after Ku K'ai-chih. Giorgione's love of nature was to lead Italian art away from the sensual. But in China art had never suffered this danger. Ku K'ai-chih merely

*Southern Art.
Ku K'ai-chih
and the
Painters*

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gave expression to the love of nature and feeling of oneness with the universe which had for centuries been implicit in the Chinese attitude to life.

The primitive essays at painting landscape were often made on scrolls which, when unrolled, gave a long narrow picture, a literal panorama of hills and winding streams which formed the naturalistic setting for the figures and their story. Great sense of space and atmosphere was thus given even upon a horizontal scroll only a few inches in height and meant to be unfolded a foot or so at a time. The most celebrated of the master's works was a silk scroll with a series of scenes known as 'The Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies'. Each scene illustrates a passage of the 'admonitions' with which the scroll is inscribed. For instance, 'The Hunter', already referred to, shows in the foreground a kneeling man who draws his bow at a bird poised above the rocks at the foot of a distant mountain. The text reads: 'In nature there is nothing high which is not soon brought down.' Another scene represents 'Ladies at their Toilet'. (See Plate VIII.) Its text reads: 'Men and women know how to adorn their persons, but few know how to embellish their souls.' The mastery of composition and the imaginative power displayed in these drawings is astounding. They are executed in decisive yet delicate line and the contours are filled in with washes of quiet colour. In character they are reminiscent of the sketches on the Han tomb bricks in the

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Boston Museum, but they are more finished. They show too that (as in the last-named sketches) the ideal of feminine beauty was still light and graceful. Although a few inches only in height and intended merely as illustrations for an accompanying text, these groups alone have been sufficient to secure an undying fame for the artist. The scroll has been much damaged and restored, but it is endorsed with the honorific seals of many emperors and distinguished collectors and is now to be seen in the British Museum.

A few years later lived the famous painter Lu T'an-wei. Apart from his pictorial works he is especially notable for the extraordinary virtuosity of his brushwork, and he is said to have been able to execute a complete drawing with one continuous and rapidly moving stroke of the brush. This mastery over the unbroken line was the twin ideal of both painting and writing, and the parallel development of the two arts was never more close than at this period.

There were many artists hardly less famous in the fifth and sixth centuries, one of whom, Chang Seng-yu, should be mentioned. He was a prolific worker and made many pictures for Buddhist temples besides the portraits for which he was famous. For him, as for other artists of his day, the dragon and the tiger were creatures which had a special appeal. During two thousand years the popularity of these *motifs* had been increasing, partly due to the symbolic significance which they shared with the tortoise and

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the red bird as emblems of the four quarters of the world. But now the tiger and the dragon outstripped their heraldic compeers in public favour, for they began to be imbued with new attributes: the dragon with spiritual forces and the tiger with earthly power. Both became as indispensable in the repertoire of Chinese painters as the emblems in Italian art of the three archangels, the dragon of St. Michael, the lily of St. Gabriel, and the fish of St. Raphael. So, too, the recurrence in Chinese pictures of Kuan-yin and the Buddha with the sixteen Lohan (apostles) compares with the inevitable subjects of the Virgin and Christ and the Twelve Apostles in Europe. Copies of Chang's *tour de force* called 'Brushing the Elephant' have been handed down from early times, though the original itself is now lost. His pictures are said to have been informed with a mystic power, and the following legend illustrates their hypnotic influence on posterity. One day Chang completed a mural painting of four white dragons, but the onlookers noticed that he had left out their eyes. Chang explained the danger of giving sight to such spirited creatures, but when he was laughed at he finished two of them. 'At once the air became filled with thunder and lightning, the wall broke down, and the dragons ascended on clouds to heaven. But the two other dragons who had no eyes remained at their places.'

It is easy to understand the belief in such fables when one sees the soaring monsters which were painted

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for a tomb in Corea at the end of the sixth century. Though by an unknown craftsman, the lithe, winged dragon in Plate IX illustrates the mesmeric effect with which works by his greater contemporaries fascinated the onlooker. Its dynamic poise and phantom weirdness still strike the imagination and add to our wonder at the virtuosity which distinguishes the decorative art of this age. And the same mastery of medium was common to the artist whether he worked in paint or bronze, jade or stone. Sculpture especially shows the same rhythmic quality and vital flowing line. It is an archaic style, yet one that is entirely charming. The itinerant craftsmen-monks had apparently come at first from the Indo-Scyths, and this may well account for the prominent noses of the early statues, for this feature resembles the large nose which appears on Indo-Scythian coins. The Chinese craftsman for a time copied this convention and did not carve figures with the typical native low-bridged nose till considerably later. The early Wei figures also display several other marked characteristics. The faces are broad and they wear a curious smile. The legs of seated statues are often shown crossed at the shins, while the gown is folded over the left shoulder and descends to the pedestal in graceful folds, with the ends draped over the upper edge and front of the base in flat pleats as if of linen. As in Han times, both anatomy and drapery are still subordinate to the conception as an entity; but not to the same

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degree. The folds of drapery are now conventionalized as rhythmic flowing lines incised upon the surface, and in standing figures they end at the skirts in gay swallow-tail curves. But though neither the body nor its covering are rendered with the purpose of reproducing the actual object, the result carries conviction combined with a pleasing air of serenity and grace.

The building of the first Buddhist temple, and later of the first Chinese pagoda were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The latter is *Pagodas* said to have been erected at Nanking by the reigning emperor, encouraged by a foreign monk, but further historical details are lacking. It is probable that its design, like that of later Chinese pagodas, was largely a development of a foreign type of tower, knowledge of which was introduced with Buddhism. As the pagoda has always been a Chinese feature more characteristic yet less understood than any other, it may be of interest here to give some account of it. The prototype was an Indian monument called a stūpa, the common form of Buddhist reliquary, of which the best-known examples are the ruined stūpa at Sānchī and the famous stūpa of King Kaniska at Peshawar. Kaniska was the most celebrated of the kings of the Indo-Scyths, and we have seen that the Chinese occasionally had communication with this race and that from them an envoy had brought news of Buddhism in 2 B.C.

The earliest recorded Buddhist temple was previously

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referred to as built in the second century A.D. According to Professor Paul Pelliot it had metal discs piled up at the top. It may therefore have been of the semi-stūpa type resembling the temples in Nepal. This type, with its monastery buildings as a base and the tower with its discs rising above, has survived in the now rare stūpa type of monastery which can still be seen in the mountain range that separates China from Tibet. The lower portion of the building is a widespread base consisting of seven storeys diminishing upwards like a stepped pyramid, while above this rises a central tower shaped like an inverted bell and handle.¹ The whole design is a close parallel to the fully developed Indian model. The latter had a stepped platform surmounted by a hemispherical or semi-ovoid dome from which rose a square plinth carrying a round central shaft decorated with 'piled up metal discs', set horizontally one above another. The discs resembled a series of superposed umbrella-like roofs pierced by the 'stick' or central shaft. Two examples of this late type have been found in India, one a stone model of a temple from Bodh-Gayā, the other a stone memorial stūpa in the Sārnāth Museum.² But of full-size examples of a temple in the stūpa design there still stands only one, the small stone

¹'Chinese Pagodas', Arnold Silcock, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 14 April 1928, p. 362.

²'The Development of the Stūpa', A. H. Longhurst, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, vol. xxxvi, 1928.

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building at Nalanda in Bengal. There are larger kinds left amongst the later Nepalese wooden temples, and of these the famous one near Katmandu might well serve as the standard transitional type, for in design it lies half-way between the stūpa monument of India and the earliest existing pagoda of China.

As the stūpa spread north and eastward through Burma, Nepal, and the Himalayas, its design gradually altered, and in this way the Himalayan architecture of wood probably influenced the first pagodas in China which, record states, were built of timber.¹ Surviving examples show that each change tended to increase the importance of the tapering tower with its series of rings or discs. In addition it is known that in the mid-fifth century a Chinese pilgrim to India recorded in his journal the measurements of Kaniṣka's great stūpa at Peshawar. There are records of missions sent to India, and of missionaries who came from India, introducing actual models of famous statues and buildings of stūpa form. These records show that some of the Buddhist architecture of the time in China copied the architecture of India and the lofty towers which were built no doubt were forerunners of the towers now known as pagodas. Since many were built of wood they did not long survive.

The oldest pagoda still in existence is a brick structure, built in A.D. 523 during the Northern Wei period at Sung Shan in Honan (one of the five sacred

¹A. H. Longhurst, *op. cit.*

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mountains of China). It is an octagonal building of striking design set in beautiful surroundings. The date is assigned to it by Dr. Sirén from evidence of its style and from ancient records. This tower is massive yet graceful, a model of the method whereby the best is absorbed from foreign sources and united with something distinguished and distinctively Chinese. It has a convex outline and, instead of roofs, a series of horizontal string courses resembling rings rising upon its shaft. Though the tower is built of brick its design is still very like that of a wood Nepalese stūpa temple, and it may well represent the transitional stage from which evolved the many-roofed pagoda. (See Plate XI.)

It seems probable, then, that the stūpa's very typical tapering shaft, carrying superimposed discs or rings, ultimately evolved into a tapering tower divided into diminishing storeys by a series of umbrella-like roofs. Thus the roofs of the fully developed Chinese pagoda reflect the form of their earliest stage of evolution in India, for they began as actual umbrellas fixed upon the stūpas. Their history is one of those fascinating bypaths of art for the tracing of which credit must be given to the archaeologist. Umbrellas occur as emblems of sovereignty in the wall paintings of ancient Egypt. Centuries later they appear on the sculptural reliefs of Assyria, and later still in the sculptures of Persepolis. Their symbolic use spread to the East and they became round, flat-topped affairs, decorated

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with bells, in the India of Asoka, the king who raised Buddhism from the obscurity of a small sect to the status of a recognized religion. In those days the stūpa consisted of the usual terrace, steps, and dome, with a large stone coffer for the relics raised upon the dome's crown. The coffer was closed by a heavy stone lid as a protection from robbers, and as the robbers became more enterprising so the custom grew of adding more and heavier slabs. When the religion obtained the support of Asoka he permitted his royal emblem, an umbrella (probably made in copper), to be placed on the topmost slab. But even this did not scare marauders for long, so, as with the previous custom of adding lids, more and more umbrellas were placed on the reliquary by the trusting mourners, until eventually the stūpas looked like large boulders with a swarm of mushrooms sprouting from their crowns. At last a master mason more brilliant than his fellows hit upon the scheme of providing one central staff which could carry an indefinite number of umbrellas. Thence it was a short step to the wood or metal mast with a series of metal discs and from this to the stone shaft carved with superimposed rings and small triangular pendants representing the bells. The increase in size and the heavier proportions required by a stone or brick structure would help to influence the sturdy pagoda-like form of early towers of this type in China, and of such is the magnificent example at Sung Shan. From then onwards the shaft retained its increased

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importance as a tower, while the domed lower portion, its original purpose long forgotten, fell into disuse and soon disappeared. As the true pagoda form evolved it became the custom to shield the projecting lower stories from the weather by making the rings in the form of umbrella-like pent roofs. Often there were thirteen, representing the Buddhist heavens, with a topmost umbrella-roof for the highest heaven—a form closely resembling the Indian prototype.¹

The evolution of the design does not, however, help to explain the purpose for which pagodas were built. They appear to have lost all connexion with the stūpa as a Buddhist reliquary, for, as we have seen, the dome and coffer features have atrophied and disappeared in the pagoda, leaving only the shaft-like tower with its umbrella roofs. Many theories have been advanced to explain the significance and lasting popularity of this, an architectural form which seems of no practical value and is the expression of no material need. Chief among the theorists is the German scholar Boerschmann, who believes that the Buddhist reliquary, when it was imported from India, appealed forcibly to the Chinese people, with whom towers had always been popular. He was perhaps thinking of the *t'ai*, lofty look-out towers reputed to have been first built by

¹I have drawn freely from the full and scholarly account of the evolution of the umbrella *motif*, given in 'The Development of the Stūpa', A. H. Longhurst, *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, vol. xxxvi, 1928.

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the emperors of the Shang-Yin period in their hunting parks, and of the smaller decorative towers of wood which were built in later times.

He suggests in the first place that the widespread custom of tower building shows that the Chinese also had tendencies towards individual expression, as opposed to ancestor worship, and that the high towers, which free themselves from earth and transcend earth, better than any other form of architecture express the essential character of Buddhism as a religion of redemption, addressing itself to the individual man and freeing him from his bondage to nature. He contrasts with these the 'horizontal' buildings of ancient China, typifying its feeling for the intimate connexion of the family with the soil and the home, and man's unity with, and unqualified dependence upon nature, which was expressed in their ancestor and nature worship. It was the development of a pavilion form which Boerschmann believes may have led the Chinese to express in their pagodas an evolution upwards, particularly in the multiplication of storeys, for the purpose of bringing down the deities.

He also suggests the philosophical explanation that, as there is need for high buildings which distinguish themselves from the mass, giving a focus point for the eye in a vista, so in spiritual life there was a need for a focus point and meeting place. And again he gives a possible political explanation, that the sovereign

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built a tower to be constantly before the eyes of the people as a symbol of his might.¹

None of these theories seem entirely satisfying although all are interesting. The fact remains, therefore, that these beautiful features of the Chinese landscape serve no known purpose. By the Confucianists they are supposed to control *fēng shuǐ*, the 'influences of wind and water', and so to bring good luck to the place that lies within their shadow, but it is doubtful whether the Buddhists connect them with any religious purpose. Yet although they are no longer regarded as depositories for the relics of Buddha's body, none the less a devout Buddhist is still sometimes alleged to acquire merit by building one. When he does so, the Chinese genius always leads him to place it just where its slender outline will most aptly provide a foil for the surrounding landscape and show to posterity that he can build beautifully in the monumental manner when the spirit moves him. The Gothic spire has been the subject of philosophic speculation of the kind put forward to account for the equally lovely and equally useless pagoda. Perhaps after all there is something in the notion that in periods of religious fervour the soul of man expresses aspiration by building towers pointing to the skies, whether he is a follower of Christ or Buddha. Certainly the priesthood of both religions taught the existence of paradise, a conception utterly without appeal to the

¹*Chinesische Architektur*, Ernst Boerschmann, Wasmuth, Berlin, 1925.

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materialistic China of Confucius, or the even more materialistic Rome of the pre-Christian era, and both these periods produced 'horizontal' buildings, not slender lofty towers.

Another well-known feature of the Chinese landscape is the stone memorial gateway of many lintels but no gates. The pairs of posts and elaborately carved beams of these *p'ai-lou* clearly show their Indian origin for, unlike pagodas, their design has been little changed throughout the centuries. If they are compared with the many-lintelled gateways in the palisade of the Indian stūpa at Sānchī the resemblance will strike the eye immediately. One of the similarities (to be seen more clearly in the Indian archetype) is the system of jointing, which shows that they were evolved from an earlier form constructed of wood. The wood form persisted in the *tori*—the Japanese version of the *p'ai-lou*. In China, in later times, they were often erected as memorials by pious widows and they usually bear inscriptions of dedication. They may be found spanning the roads and adding charm to the landscape in every part of the country.

The curved roof is another charming feature often thought of as typically Chinese. But it is no more indigenous than the pagoda or the *p'ai-lou*.

In Europe a simple oblong building may be roofed by two straight slopes like a capital 'A', the sides resting upon the longer walls at the eaves and running up to meet at the centre along the line of the ridge.

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At each of the two shorter ends the wall may be carried up into the capital A to support the roof beams and it is then called a gable end. Alternatively the tops of all four walls may be kept at the same level at the eaves, and the ends of the building are then also covered with roof-slopes, in the same way and with the same angle as the roof-slopes covering the sides. The joint where the side and end roof-slopes meet—on plan—forms a right angle. These junctions are called hips. It is this form, the hipped roof, which is almost universal in Chinese buildings, although the ends of a roof are often found with the upper half gabled and the lower half hipped. In ancient times the usual kind was the hipped roof with four straight roof-slopes.

It will be remembered that this type was shown in the bas-reliefs of the Han dynasty from the Wu Liang tombs in Shantung, and there is no evidence of the building of *curved* roofs before the Northern Wei dynasty. During the latter period, however, curvilinear roofs were evidently well known, for a roof with the boldest possible sweep at its horned hips is shown on a stone relief—a stele—of this time. No actual remains of such buildings now exist because the fatal custom of constructing them in wood persisted, but there is little doubt that the roof above mentioned represented that of a Chinese building influenced by the curvilinear roofs of Indian Buddhist architecture.

The origin of the curved roof has perhaps aroused



PLATE XV. A Boy-Rishi Riding on a Goat. Painting in colours on silk attributed to Han Kan, but possibly Sung period. Length $25\frac{3}{4}$ inches; width $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches. British Museum. (*See page 187.*)



PLATE XVI. One of a Pair of Horses in Combat. Pottery statuette. ? T'ang period.
The Eumorfopoulos collection. (*See page 196.*)

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more controversy and given rise to more far-fetched theories than any other single feature of Chinese art. One of the most popular theories alleges that its form has persisted from the sagging curve of skin tents, the dwellings of the Chinese in a nomad stage of their history. But, apart from other objections, it is sufficient to say that there is no evidence that such a nomad stage ever existed. Another theory is that the concave roof lines were built in imitation of the curving branches of pine trees and that the little figures of fabulous animals which ornament the hip-tiles represent squirrels running along or sitting on the branches! The pragmatical school states that roofs were gradually made at a steeper pitch so that heavy rain should drain off rapidly: at the same time they were made to project far out at the eaves in order to throw the rain drips clear of the walls. Later, upcurved eaves had to be adopted to ensure that light and air should flow freely under them into the building. This theory is not borne out by other equally practical considerations: for Chinese roofs often curve throughout their slope, not at the eaves alone, while doors and windows rarely open high up under them. The explanation is probably still simpler. Earthenware roof-tiles of all countries are extremely heavy, and much more so when soaked with rain. On the other hand, the rafters upon which they were laid were thin strips of wood that tended to sag under their load. This was the ancient practice both in India and China, so far

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as can be seen in old carvings and rock-cut reproductions of tiled roofs, and it is still the practice at the present day. A slight bending of the rafters was therefore recognized as natural in building small roofs, and in the larger it might well have been purposely exaggerated in order to obtain the pleasing effect of a more definite curve. But this exaggeration was first practised in India over five hundred years before the Northern Wei period in China, as we see from the wall paintings in the caves of Ajantā and in the carved reliefs at Sānchī. It seems likely, therefore, that this curvilinear form, first developing in India, became known to the Chinese at the same time and in the same way as did so many other features of Indian art after the introduction of Buddhism.

There is still one typically Chinese refinement which has not been accounted for—the ‘horn’ at the angle of curved roofs. But this is largely an added refinement to the naturally upcurving hip. Where, at the corner of a building, two curving roof-slopes meet at right angles, some way must be found to cover the junction and provide at the same time a watertight joint and an effective sky-line. The extension of this corner roof feature into a ‘horn’, constructed either in glazed pottery hip-tiles or in cement with moulded decoration, fulfilled both purposes perfectly.

The period of the Three Kingdoms and the following epoch of the Division of North and South, brought about by the invasion of China by the T’o-pa Tartars,

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saw the rapid growth of Buddhism. In art the evidence of this growth is seen particularly in the records of religious paintings and sculpture, the earliest temples with curved roofs and the first cave-shrines and pagodas. There exist actual ruins of the latter and of sculpture, both in a fair state of preservation, and these help us to visualize the enormous power of the Buddhist religion at the close of the Northern Wei (Tartar) dynasty in the mid-sixth century A.D.



FIG. 11. PORTRAITS ENGRAVED ON STONE

Copy of a painting probably dating from the Eastern Han dynasty. (*See pages 99 and 113.*) From an inked squeeze.

VII

BUDDHISM HEALS THE DIVISION OF NORTH AND SOUTH, A.D. 536-618

CIVILIZATION¹

By YÜAN CHIEH

To the south-east—three thousand leagues—
The Yüan and Hsiang form into a mighty lake.
Above the lake are deep mountain valleys,
And men dwelling whose hearts are without guile.
Gay like children, they swarm to the tops of the trees;
And run to the water to catch bream and trout.
Their pleasures are the same as those of beasts and birds;
They put no restraint either on body or mind.
Far I have wandered throughout the Nine Lands;
Wherever I went such manners had disappeared.
I find myself standing and wondering, perplexed,
Whether Saints and Sages have really done us good.

Painters were now at work embellishing the walls and especially the roofs of the Buddhist caves. Most of the pictures have been destroyed or defaced in one or other of the five great *Buddhism* persecutions of Buddhism, but a few remain, *Triumphant* and of these some date from about the mid-fifth century, a hundred years after the first shrine was begun. The earliest rock-cut temples are the caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-Huang *Cave Shrines* (which, it will be remembered, is situated on the extreme north-west), Yün-Kang on the northern border, and Lung-mên near Lo-yang, Honan. At the first two, foreign influences were

¹170 *Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley (Constable & Co. Ltd.), p. 97.

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already strong in the fifth and early in the sixth centuries. Later, both in sculpture and painting, details such as the decorative bands of foliage and the jewel shapes in the moulding enrichments display an Iranian origin, and some of the figures have a decidedly central Asian aspect. Both at Yün-Kang and at Lung-mên the earliest inscriptions bear the date A.D. 483, and these grottoes were probably begun about twenty-five years before that time. Yün-Kang is celebrated for its colossal rock-cut Buddhas (see Plate X) one of which is over fifty feet high. But the work at Yün-Kang ceased when the capital was removed to Lo-yang, and from that time on into the eighth century the nearby Lung-mên shrines flourished. The idea of the rock-cut temple itself had its source in India, where Buddhist cave-shrines had been made since the first century B.C. Of these the most beautiful of all are the caves at Ajantā enriched by the wonderful frescoes painted between the first and the seventh centuries A.D. Indian influence is apparent in China not only in the incidental passing on of the idea of cave-shrines, but in the many art forms and types of heavenly beings which were depicted on the small copies of frescoes and on the banners, as well as in statues, reliquaries, and religious trappings brought to China from time to time by Buddhist missionaries. Some of these forms have already been mentioned, but in the cave-paintings perhaps the most typical and attractive are the lotus

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(used as a central boss in a ceiling and as a spray with stem, leaf, and flower in painted ceiling panels), and the flying *devatā*, heavenly attendants which soar gracefully with gauzy draperies streaming out across the ceiling's painted sky. Many of these painted ceilings are divided into rectangular panels in the semblance of the real coffers and beams of Indian architecture. In some the panels are painted with floral designs, in others with squares diminishing in size to the centre and each one placed diagonally to the axis of its neighbour. This geometric design is still popular for panelled and coloured wood ceilings in China, but its origin is in the primitive square wood frames which were placed diagonally one above another diminishing to form a pyramidal roof over a square room. This roof was not invented in China but was common in south-eastern Asia, and Dr. Hackin has found a timber example still in existence.

Another cave-shrine feature is the arch, both semi-circular and three-sided, which was used over niches carved from the rock. These structural forms are also of Indian origin, and the less common angular arch persisted in later Chinese architecture. The semi-circular or (to be exact) horseshoe arch is usually enclosed within an arched moulding which rises to a point above the centre. Its 'ace of spades' outline represents the ogee moulding used in India, a conventional rendering of the pippala leaf *motif* and one common to architecture and sculpture. It is frequently

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found as a leaf-shaped aureole before which the Buddha sits, sculptured in the rock-shrine or in the small votive bronze of the period. Its significance is due to the legend that the Buddha attained enlightenment while seated in contemplation under a pippala tree. Both types of arch were developed in Gandhara, the home of the most famous school of Indian Buddhist sculpture. Both, at first surmounting the carved niches protecting statues, were used architecturally later in India and in China at cave-shrine entrances or over arches and doorways of stone, though they did not affect the post and beam architecture of wood.

Gandhara was the chief centre in northern India of a school of sculpture influenced by Greek ideas. It owed its traditional outlook to its long survival as a Grecian settlement after the conquests of Alexander the Great. Its site was the Peshawar valley, which in A.D. 78 fell into the hands of Kaniška, king of the Indo-Scyths, the Indo-European race which was then overrunning the country. This is the race from which China received Buddhist influences, and in particular the knowledge of stūpa design which so strongly affected the early pagodas. The Indo-Scyths were nomads with almost no art of their own and, being fair-complexioned and partly European, no doubt the traditional Grecian type of figure sculpture in Gandhara powerfully appealed to them. But an added incentive was the conversion of Kaniška to Buddhism. From then on the Gandhara

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school flourished and its Hellenic ideals strongly affected the art of the Far East, including eventually that of China. Among the most noticeable characteristics which ultimately reached China are the Greek method of rendering the folds of drapery and the Apollo-like cast of face. This is the most obvious departure from the indigenous Indian model, for like all the art of the Greeks it displays their preoccupation with man's beauty and intelligence whereas Indian art was solely devoted to the worship of their gods.

Before leaving the important subject of rock-cut temples one other feature must be noted. This is the evidence of a further development in the treatment of landscape. Some of the caves contain wall-paintings in which the background represents a more elaborate treatment of natural scenery than is seen in the early work of Ku K'ai-chih already referred to. Though not as yet belonging to a definite school of landscape painting, they mark a further step towards that goal and are therefore an important landmark half-way along the slowly travelled road. Together with the other cave-paintings, they are specially significant because almost every other picture of the period, whether on silk or paper, has disappeared. Except in the one or two cases mentioned, the works of the great masters can only be studied in copies of later date and compared with criticisms of them published in Chinese books, usually also of later date. But in the cave paintings can be seen authentic works of the fifth,

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sixth, and later centuries, and their authenticity in some degree balances the misfortune that they were not painted by the great masters but by competent craftsmen working in the same tradition.

The famous Six Canons of Painting were formulated by the portrait painter Hsieh Ho, who died *The Six Canons of Painting* at the beginning of the sixth century. Like Confucius, he did not originate so much as clarify and express contemporary ideas and principles which had been slowly moulded by experience and tradition. The Six Canons have ever since been accepted as the only essential criteria for the critical analysis of pictorial art, and Hsieh Ho himself takes twenty-nine painters and assesses the merit of their work by the application of his principles. It must be remembered, however, that they were laid down at a time when a separate school of landscape had not yet emerged, although they were applied to landscape pictures in course of time. The Six Canons are as follows:

1. Rhythmic Vitality.
2. Use of the Brush to form Anatomical Structure.
3. Conformation with the Objects depicted to represent them truthfully.
4. Conformation with the Objects depicted to show them in their Appropriate Colours.
5. Design and Composition.
6. Transmission of Classical Models by Study and Imitation.

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Of these No. 1 no doubt meant to suggest the spiritual, living power which informs some paintings and which moves us to say they are inspired. The Chinese considered it by far the most important, and it has since become so in Western eyes. No. 2 is both second in the list and in importance, because with painting which owes everything to the training in brush-work given by Chinese writing, structural use of the brush holds a place rarely awarded to it in the West. Nos. 3 and 4 owe their important position to the ideals of the time, when study of and truth to nature had superseded the archaic presentation of legendary subjects for which the observation of natural phenomena and daily life were not essential. No. 5 is a *sine quâ non* in which Chinese art has always excelled since the close of the Han dynasty. No. 6 reveals once more the fatal predilection for looking back rather than forward which has retarded China's development in art, and not in art alone. Although a study of traditional models seems to us desirable for the training of a student, it would hardly be included if we evolved six canons of painting. So it is perhaps the sixth canon with which our modern ideas have least in common, yet it is highly important not only as an influence on development but because to it we owe the many magnificent copies of lost masterpieces. Although the copying of classic models was definitely approved, nevertheless it must not be forgotten that the idea of art as a mere copying of *nature* had no place.

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Even more true of Chinese than of Western art are the words of Michelangelo: 'Painting is a music and a melody which intellect alone can appreciate, and that with difficulty.'

The conception of rhythmic vitality in pictorial art probably influenced the sculptural and *Sculpture* pottery figures of the time, for the latter were made by craftsmen who would look up to the painter-poets as 'gentlemen', exponents of the fine arts—calligraphy and painting. In the modelling of the human figure this rhythmic quality is helped by the swaying pose, the more easily flowing robes loosely girded by criss-cross scarves or ribbons, the ends of which seem to flutter in the breeze. The body still gives an impression of flatness, which is increased by the depressed chest, a feature supposed to be symbolical of the Buddhist's suspended breathing when withdrawn from the world in meditation. The body, indeed, bears no more relation to anatomical fact than a tailor's dummy, yet with the form given to it by the rhythmic lines of its draperies the whole conception becomes a vital and convincing entity. The lengthening of the ears marks another change in Chinese religious sculpture and recalls the fact that this feature had been well known in India for hundreds of years. Possibly the Indian custom of drawing down the ear-lobes by inserting heavy jewels in them brought about the change, for since representations of deities imported from India would also be shown

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with ears elongated in this way, the Chinese craftsman would imagine that it was a special symbol of sanctity.

An explanation of the many scenes depicted in Buddhist painting and sculpture, and the various significant poses and gestures of the figures presented would involve an historical description of the religion's evolution which would be too long and complex to give even in outline. A few of the typical subjects and their special characteristics, however, as they are met with frequently in later Chinese art, are given in Appendix III.

The supremacy of the Tartar Wei dynasties lasted from A.D. 386 to 557, and we have seen that *Progress of* the chief was the Northern Wei, followed *Buddhism* in 534 by the short-lived Eastern and Western Wei dynasties. The encouragement given by the Tartar Wei rulers to Buddhism is the most outstanding feature of the epoch. The religion spread rapidly and soon developed special characteristics which expressed the greater depth and richness of the Chinese psychology. These characteristics are either absent from the later Buddhism of Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Tibet, or else they atrophied. The chief among them was the spirit of tenderness and compassion. In the first place Hinduism had naturally influenced the Buddha's teaching. He accepted the old pantheism and the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, but adapted these conceptions to suit his own views. The gods

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became of less importance when emphasis was laid on the inexorable fate of man to reap what he had sown, and transmigration of souls became more important when this conception meant a succession of rebirths incidental to man's journey on the long road to Nirvana. The Buddha also taught that even the old gods were subject to rebirth and that god-fearing asceticism was superseded by self-sacrifice, service, and reading the scriptures as the way of salvation. To the Chinese this religion meant escape from the despondency bred by that too ready submission to fate which mars their native nobility of character. Once they had tasted the freedom offered by the new faith they desired more and more. So it was natural that they should adopt the later form—called Mahayana—which held out to each man the prospect of attaining for himself Buddhahood and endless happiness in paradise, rather than the earlier form—Hinayana—which taught the original austerities of the Buddha, a succession of good lives, and an ultimate cessation of desire in Nirvana.

The religion of Taoism no doubt aided the acceptance of this concept of the Paradise (and Hell) of Mahayana Buddhism, for, as we have seen, Taoism had long taught the belief in immortality and the Isles of the Blest. So much was this the case that the history of the fruitless search for the Elixir of Immortality by the Taoists corresponds both in its nature and its widespread sway to the labours of the

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alchemists in mediaeval Europe. But the Buddhist believer had the inestimable advantage of heavenly aid, for it was the Mahayana school which first taught that man was helped to find the true path by compassionate beings called Bodhisattvas. And further, that by duly following this path he himself might eventually become a Bodhisattva—a guardian who has achieved, but voluntarily delayed, deification in order to help humanity towards the ultimate paradise and Buddhahood. But nothing shows the power of Buddhism more than this period's revised version of the ancient story of Lao-tzŭ's last journey into the West. The Taoist belief that the old philosopher at the end of his long life mounted an ox, rode away, and vanished into the West, has been mentioned in Chapter III, but in the altered story an incongruous climax appears, for after his disappearance he was now said to have become a Buddha.

The spread of Buddhism was not entirely free from set-backs. Twice in this epoch there were persecutions; the first, in A.D. 444, lasting for eight years, and the second in A.D. 573, when the emperor issued an edict abolishing the religion. But it survived these attacks, defeating the growing jealousy of the Taoists and the Confucianists which could not shake its hold upon the imagination of the people. Thus, by the beginning of the fifth century, the religion had spread to the kingdoms which occupied the region now called Corea, and thence to Japan. It is to this circumstance

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that we owe precious examples of Chinese Buddhist painting and sculpture still preserved in collections there.

In the last chapter it was shown that the Northern
Buddhist Wei of T'o-pa Tartar ancestry adopted both
Sculpture that form of the religion and of art prevalent in North China, the land they had conquered, and that thus their Buddhist sculptures at first displayed the native and Indo-Scythian features already present in the existing Chinese School. These included a certain flatness in rendering the human figure, a curious smile, a wedge-shaped nose, and a dignified pose and flowing lines of drapery, legacies of the Gandharan School. By the end of the Wei period (in the mid-sixth century) the type had gradually changed until the flatness of body had begun to give way to a cylindrical form. The skirts, especially in seated Buddha figures, had grown longer and more delicately pleated until sometimes they were shown like a carved cascade over the whole front of the throne, occupying as much space as the figure itself, while in standing figures the draperies had lost their curving swallow-tails but developed streamer-like ribands. The noble example of the later period shown in Plate XII is a standing Bodhisattva in stone, three feet in height, a gem of the Eumorfopoulos collection. In this lovely figure the two scarf-like ribands fall from the shoulders, and passing criss-cross through a ring below the waist, descend in loops over the knees and rise again to



PLATE XVII. Mirror-back. Blackish bronze with green patina. T'ang period. The Louvre. (*See page 198.*)



PLATE XVIII. Seated Lohan. Ceramic statue with coloured glazes; a little more than life size. T'ang period. British Museum. (*See page 196.*)

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hang like long streamers from the wrists to the ground. The lightly etched draperies have a grace which with the dignity of pose and the austere serenity of expression captivates the imagination and disarms criticism. Yet a cold-blooded inspection reveals the shortness of the legs and the undue smallness of hands and feet—instances of the lack of attention to anatomical fact still to be found at the close of the Tartar Wei period.

There is a parallelism in the Buddhist sculpture of the sixth century in China with the Romanesque sculpture of France. In Europe the victories of the Visigoths were so cataclysmic that the fall of Rome involved the eclipse of art. It was not till more than six hundred years later, in the eleventh century, that a school of religious sculpture reappeared in France—a school analogous to the religious sculpture of the Tartar Wei period in China. This Romanesque school, in its archaic phase, represented Christ supported by the Evangelists carved on the tympana (or stone-filled arches) over the church doors, and the Christ is often shown seated with crossed legs. It will be remembered that the Buddha (supported by Bodhi-sattvas) is also frequently shown in this pose. Another parallelism is found a little later in the more cylindrical rendering of the body, with its clinging clothing, which increases remarkably the resemblance between these two outstanding schools of East and West. The third similarity is found in the horizontal band of tiny subordinate figures which often decorates the base below

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the groups of large-scale figures in the relief carving of both countries. When, in the twelfth-century Toulouse school of Romanesque sculpture, Christ and the Evangelists are represented, the row of miniature figures along the base represent Elders. When, in sixth- and seventh-century Chinese Buddhist sculpture, the Buddha with Disciples and Bodhisattvas are depicted, the small figures represent Heavenly Musicians and Dancers. We are all familiar with the custom (somewhat self-righteous to our eyes) of painting portraits of the donors in the immediate foreground of many masterpieces of Italian art. This custom grew up in China also, and similar kneeling figures of his pious paymasters were carved by the sculptor on the bases of monuments. It is not of course suggested that Chinese art influences of the sixth and early seventh century spread in an ever-widening circle till some far-flung ripple at the circumference reached Europe more than five hundred years later. Nevertheless some of the parallelisms described suggest that the mind of man reacts in an almost predictable way, even when two races, periods and countries appear to be utterly unsympathetic, dissimilar, and separate.

In A.D. 520 the Indian patriarch Bodhidharma had arrived in China. One of the miracles he performed was the crossing of the Yangtse river standing on a reed, and this episode is a favourite subject with later artists, who never forgot to give him a swarthy Indian

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aspect. But he is chiefly celebrated as the alleged founder of the Ch'an or Zen sect of Buddhism which is referred to in the next chapter.

The pottery of the Wei period shows a slight but definite advance in technique, but examples are rare. The difficulties of attribution are increased because a few years ago foreign collectors acquired the regrettable habit of labelling 'Wei' anything which was cruder than similar examples of the great T'ang period which followed. Even now very little is known about the pottery of the four centuries of unsettled political conditions which endured from the fall of the Han to the founding of the T'ang dynasty in A.D. 618. In spite of the fact that this period included the supremacy of the Tartar Wei dynasties, few examples of ceramic art have been recovered beyond crude grave objects. The latter include small figures of men and women, the former often on horseback, and some continuing the Han tradition of mimicking the appearance of bronze. Their draperies, it is true, are more flowing and the style is in the same tradition as the stone sculpture of the Wei, yet lamentably coarse by comparison. But included also are the outstanding examples of porcellanous stoneware, usually bottle-
Pottery of Wei Period
Beginnings of Porcelain
vases and bowls, which have been proved to be the immediate forerunners of porcelain. They were turned on the potter's wheel and fashioned from a red clay which contains a fairly high proportion of kaolin,

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the actual white china-clay from which true porcelain was made during the later T'ang dynasty. They claim special attention because they indicate that the Chinese must have hit upon most of the secrets of true porcelain-making soon after the third century A.D. Western scholars have for many years known about the Chinese accounts which tell of Han porcelain, but no authentic examples of it have yet been discovered. This failure has really been due to a misunderstanding of the meaning of the original term for porcelain. In China the term *tz'ü* was first used to designate a finer, harder sort of glazed pottery, and, as the potter's skill increased and his methods improved, this term was still used until at last it included true porcelain. The word 'porcelain' is the English term for hard, resonant wares which are translucent, but the Chinese term *tz'ü* does not mean 'translucent ware': it is a general term for hard, resonant wares, including both the translucent and the opaque. Correctly translated, therefore, *tz'ü* means porcellaneous wares, including porcelain. There is no doubt that the former were being made during the Han dynasty. The Wei period discoveries, however, show that the potters had rapidly acquired a higher degree of skill although they were still using crude methods—the only methods then available. This improvement soon earned official recognition, for history records that in the latter part of the third century, pottery from a certain well-known kiln 'was intended for the use of the Court, and

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offered to the Emperor'.¹ This is the first known record of pottery being considered fine enough to be 'offered to the Emperor', for in Han and still earlier times no mention of it is made either in the tribute lists or in records of gifts to the sovereign. But from now on the kilns received imperial encouragement and these finer wares appear in official records. Their body was of a coarse but extremely hard porcellanous material. If it had been ground finer, as it was when methods improved in later years, a true (translucent) porcelain might have resulted. But even at this time it was covered with a non-porous porcelain coat to prevent it from absorbing the outer covering, the latter being a new greenish-yellow glaze, also a true porcelain glaze, in this case transparent and of very fine quality. When the ware is struck it gives out a ringing sound which nevertheless falls short of the clear musical note of true porcelain. The walls of these vessels are still opaque, for a hint of the delicacy and translucency of body yet to come only appeared at the end of the sixth century.

The division between north and south had lasted for about two hundred years. During this lapse of time the power of Buddhism had increased enormously all over politically divided China and had profoundly af-

*Buddhism unites
North and
South China*

¹*The Beginnings of Porcelain in China*, Berthold Laufer, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Publication 192, Anthropological Series, vol. xv, no. 2, 1917, p. 101.

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fectured her art. In the north its influence is chiefly seen in the realm of sculpture and in the south in that of painting. Unconsciously the Tartar Wei kingdoms of the north were being drawn closer to the native kingdoms of the south by the strengthening bonds of their common religion. The whole of China became at last united as a Buddhist nation just as Europe was united in mediaeval times by the supremacy of the Catholic Church.

In A.D. 581 this union of religious aims was further encouraged by the unification of the empire
Sui Dynasty with the founding of the brilliant though short-lived Sui dynasty. The accession enhanced the authority of the religion, and this seems more than anything else to have united the nation and prepared a fertile field for a more rapid growth of culture. Buddhism quickly achieved a greater pre-eminence than ever before, and its increased popularity, officially encouraged, in turn encouraged a tremendous activity among artists and craftsmen. Thousands of new temples were built, decorated with mural paintings, sculpture, banners, statues of silver and gold, and all the furniture and trappings in wood, bronze, and lacquer which were needed to complete the *ensemble*. But relics of this ascendancy are few, and thousands of beautiful temples perished with the priests during the wars and persecutions which followed. Nevertheless it was to the new spirit of the Sui dynasty that the Golden Age of the T'ang period owed its inception.

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Among the innovations resulting from the adoption of the Mahayana school of Buddhism, and *Transition* dating from the Sui, are the great frescoes *Period* representing Amitabha Buddha, the Ruler of the Western Paradise, and from now on his cult was in the ascendant. How effectively the paradise subject was portrayed can be seen, though dimly, in the ruined wall-paintings of some of the later cave-shrines. But those in the new timber-built temples have all disappeared as the buildings decayed or were ruined by fire, war, or waves of iconoclastic destruction. The art also progressed in every other direction and the names of scores of painters of portraits, panoramic scrolls, and other subjects are known, although their works are lost. Both Iranian and Indian influences now flowed more freely into China, and the later Indian or Gupta school of sculpture brought in its train a gracious voluptuousness. A period of transition had already set in before the Sui accession, heralded by a greater suppleness in the figure sculpture, more elaborate costumes, and an almost abandoned freedom in the swinging necklaces and swaying folds of drapery. In the border ornament of carved foliage or the palmettes on rock-cut capitals in the cave-shrines the same character and sinuous grace appeared. Once more this quality displayed itself most clearly in representations of the dragon. Whether coiling in pairs along the borders of a stone stele, guarding either side of the cave entrance to a rock-cut

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shrine, or entwined round the shoulders of a granary urn from the tombs, their serpentine bodies now writhed more nearly in the manner of the dragon in modern Chinese art. The images which they often protect now wore the chains of jewels and gem-studded head-dress which are associated with the late sixth century, and the folds of draperies stood out as rounded ridges and were more definitely Indian in type. The faces became fuller and rounder, the circular halo supplanted the leaf-shaped aureole, luxuriant foliage entwined sculptured bases and borders, and they in turn were enriched by jewel shapes carved on their mouldings, a heritage of Iranian influence on Indian forms. Indicative also of the questing spirit of the age is the story that the Emperor's new palace library was built with doors and windows which opened when the room was entered and closed when it was left. The once favourite Buddha image, Maitreya, was now being displaced by Sakyamuni, frequently made in bronze, and the charm of the bronzes of this time is nowhere better shown than in the celebrated altar-piece formerly in the Tuan Fang collection. All art expressed joy and freedom, and its manifestations merged imperceptibly with those of the next period—the glorious epoch of the T'ang.

VIII

THE T'ANG DYNASTY, A.D. 618-906 *THE GOLDEN AGE*

AN EARLY LEVÉE¹

Addressed to CH'ÊN, the Hermit

AT Ch'ang-an—a full foot of snow;
A levée at dawn—to bestow congratulations on the Emperor.
Just as I was nearing the Gate of the Silver Terrace,
After I had left the suburb of Hsin-ch'ang
On the high causeway my horse's foot slipped;
In the middle of the journey my lantern suddenly went out.
Ten leagues riding, always facing to the North;
The cold wind almost blew off my ears.
I waited for the bell outside the Five Gates;
I waited for the summons within the Triple Hall.
My hair and beard were frozen and covered with icicles;
My coat and robe—chilly like water.
Suddenly I thought of Hsien-yu Valley
And secretly envied Ch'ên Chü-shih,
In warm bed-socks dozing beneath the rugs
And not getting up till the sun has mounted the sky.

The T'ang dynasty is regarded by Chinese and foreigner alike as the Golden Age of art and culture, for while it is a period especially famous for its paintings—sculpture, pottery, bronze, and other crafts also show an extraordinary virility, grandeur of conception, and success in the incorporation of *motifs* from abroad.

The rapid rise of the Sui dynasty was followed only

¹By the famous poet of the T'ang period, Po Chü-i. Quoted from *170 Chinese Poems*, Arthur Waley (Constable & Co. Ltd.), p. 115. The old capital city at Ch'ang-an, in the north-west, was restored in the early years of the dynasty.

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a score of years later by as rapid a fall. The great founder of the new dynasty, T'ang T'ai Tsung, usurped the throne in A.D. 618. But this event did not interrupt the consolidation of the empire or the revival of culture which were already in full swing. On the contrary, the boundless energy and genius of the new ruler accelerated a movement which nothing could have stopped, for all the conditions were favourable and the time was ripe for an unparalleled revival. Among these favourable conditions was the absorption of traditional enemies like the Hsiung-nu. For centuries the Chinese emperors had attempted to placate these foes by means of gifts and especially by seeking marriages of convenience with them in which many royal princesses were sacrificed to political necessity. Poems lamenting their fate were written by more than one of these unfortunates, and in the Gobi Desert, legend says, there once stood the grave of a girl who had been given to the Khan of the Hsiung-nu by the Emperor in 33 B.C.: in all that desolate waste it was the only mound where the grass would grow. But after the lapse of centuries these tribes had become united with the Chinese through the effects of intermarriage and changing conditions, with the result that the foreign elements in the empire were now a source of strength. The construction of the Imperial Canal, begun in the Sui dynasty and intended to connect the principal cities with the capital, was continued, while the restoration of the capital at Ch'ang-an in the north-west

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furthered opportunities for military enterprise in Asia which had also been initiated under the Sui. But though there were successes in arms, other enemies were made and the Tibetans especially had grown strong enough occasionally to resist attack. Uighur Turks, Turcomans, Mongols, and Manchus were becoming forces to be reckoned with, but as yet there was no sign that the two latter were to change China's destiny.

The 'public libraries' of this time consisted of the book-collections housed in the temples. At Tun-Huang, that oasis and gateway to China through which countless foreigners had to pass at the end of their long journey across the central Asian deserts, have been found documents in dozens of languages, some of them now indecipherable. They included the Manichaeian Confession among scores of other writings and paintings, all evidence of the welcome given at this period to the peoples and the religion and art of other lands.

The revival which put forth buds in the Sui dynasty burst into full flower during the T'ang. But, *Revival of Art* as with every manifestation of art in China, the growth was slower than a simile suggests. Until the beginning of the eighth century the unfolding process continued, following the lines of development initiated under the Sui. There are three great periods of Chinese art, especially great for their paintings, covering approximately the duration of the T'ang, the Sung,

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and the Ming dynasties. Each of these periods lasted about three hundred years. Each had distinct characteristics of its own in its attitude to life and its time which influenced the technique and expression of its art. Under the T'ang the readiness to receive abundant influences from abroad was evident from the beginning. In the mid-seventh century, seven Buddha images (including a copy in sandalwood of the most famous statue of antiquity in India), together with copies of the Buddhist scriptures, were brought back by the celebrated envoys Hsüang Tsang and I Tsing. The latter also gives the first recorded description of true porcelain which, he says, like lacquer, was previously unknown in India although glazed earthenware was in use. Other travellers and artists came from India and central Asia to China, and Chinese journeyed to these distant lands bringing back ideas and *objets d'art* which affected (but never diverted) the course of tradition. The results can be seen more clearly in sculpture than in painting, for the finest of the few examples of mural decoration remaining from the seventh century are preserved in Japan. But with the eighth century there are some surviving though damaged frescoes to be seen in the cave-shrines, although experts differ as to the correct dating of others in non-Chinese collections and museums. The figures in these religious works are at first glance strong and dignified, and it is only later that the onlooker notices and perhaps regrets the

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feminine wealth of jewels and the diaphanous draperies with which they are clothed. This period saw the great popularity of the Bodhisattva figures—especially the growing cult of Kuan-yin—the more frequent occurrence of those strange many-armed and many-headed Hindu deities, and additions to the variety of poses and incarnations in which the Buddha was presented. From the mid-eighth century onwards there appears in painting a growing mastery over composition and the illusion of space and volume without any emphasis on actual perspective. The colours became richer and the delineation of character in face and gesture more charged with the conviction awarded by close observation. The faces and heads are skilfully modelled and an impression of figures standing out in full relief is given without resort to tricks of light and shade. It is a heroic art yet graced by the Chinese command of gliding sinuous line. The frescoes of this date from the Tun-Huang caves and the paintings on canvas and silk recovered from the same caves all show the rapid strides which the art was making. The latter can be seen in the collections brought back by Professor Pelliot and Sir Aurel Stein from Tun-Huang. Part of Sir Aurel's collection is now in the British Museum; it is fully described and illustrated in the books which have already been mentioned, but the great majority of the examples are of later date, i.e. from the end of the ninth to the tenth centuries. The subjects are chiefly the very

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numerous Buddha legends and the paradise pictures in which deities float in the depths of limitless space, adoring and making music before the Buddha enthroned. A whole host of attendant figures also appear: the Bodhisattvas, especially the above-mentioned Kuan-yin, originally rendered as a male form but later as a Goddess of Mercy; the sixteen Lohan or Arhats (apostles of Buddha), whose number was increased in course of time, particularly in Japan; and the fierce Lokapalas, guardians of the four quarters of the world. Many other divinities, demons, and emblems crowd the heavens or encrust the bright-hued borders like gems, but they are too multitudinous to number. In them can be seen more clearly than anywhere else the extent and variety of Indian and Tibetan contributions to Chinese art. An endless multitude of forms was absorbed from a foreign mythology and transformed into Chinese types by these craftsmen.

Painting as a Fine Art Apart from frescoes, which, in the cave-shrines and temples, were usually painted by craftsmen who were classed with the sculptor-craftsmen, there was a distinct group of cultivated men who practised painting as a fine art. They used for their 'studio pictures' the ink cake, which, when ground down with water, can yield a range of tones varying from a deep vivid black to the softest silver grey. The materials in use then were, and still are, woven silk or paper, Chinese ink, and the *pi*—the

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writing-brush, or brush-pencil as it is often called. And since the technique of all art must be determined by the materials used, so the art of painting was limited in its development and proceeded along certain definite lines. As colour or ink was always of very watery consistency the paper for painting would be laid horizontally to prevent the colour running from the strokes, as it would have done if the paper had been placed at an angle or vertically on an easel. The silk or paper was soft and absorbent, and this necessitated quick decisive strokes of the brush to avoid blotting and spreading of the colour. The brush was held vertically above the paper as this method gave the maximum control over the instrument. All these factors added limitations to the technique so that the painter was obliged to depend for his effect on line drawing rapidly executed, flowing yet decisive. Furthermore, owing to the difficulty of drawing from a model in this fashion, and still more because a realistic representation was with these simple materials almost impossible, all objects were very soon conventionalized in drawing. The earliest and most urgent incentive towards such conventionalization was naturally the necessity of drawing the primitive pictographs and ideographs rapidly and simply but without sacrificing legibility. But another circumstance must be noted—that picture-drawing with the brush proceeded from the art of picture-writing with the brush and that the two evolved into the arts

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of painting and calligraphy side by side, complementary to each other as media for the expression of thoughts and feelings. If all these factors are borne in mind the development and distinctive character of Chinese painting is seen to be natural—almost inevitable. The result was that by the T'ang period the highest expression of culture came from an intellectual aristocracy, often though not always of noble birth, to whom knowledge and appreciation of the classics was a birthright and who inevitably communicated ideas through poetry, at that time a normal medium of expression, transmitted by means either of calligraphy or painting. Drama and the novel were later developments which owed much to foreign inspiration, so that it is fair to say that during the T'ang dynasty the painter-poets were pre-eminent.

Many famous artists of the period took groups of scholars or monks as a popular subject for pictures. The rivalry between the two religions is amusingly illustrated by the story that a painting by a famous artist of a 'Drunken Buddhist Monk' aroused the vengeful Buddhists to commission another famous artist to paint a 'Drunken Taoist Monk.' These two have become very popular themes with later artists. So also have the celebrated poet Po Chü-i and his friends, known as 'The Nine Old Men at Hsiangshan' (who lived at this time close to the famous Lung-mên cave-shrines), and other equally well-

*Religious
Paintings
and the
Great Land-
scape Painters*



PLATE XIX. Bird on Bough. By an unknown painter of the Sung period. Colours on silk. $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The Eumorfopoulos collection, British Museum. (*See page 208.*)

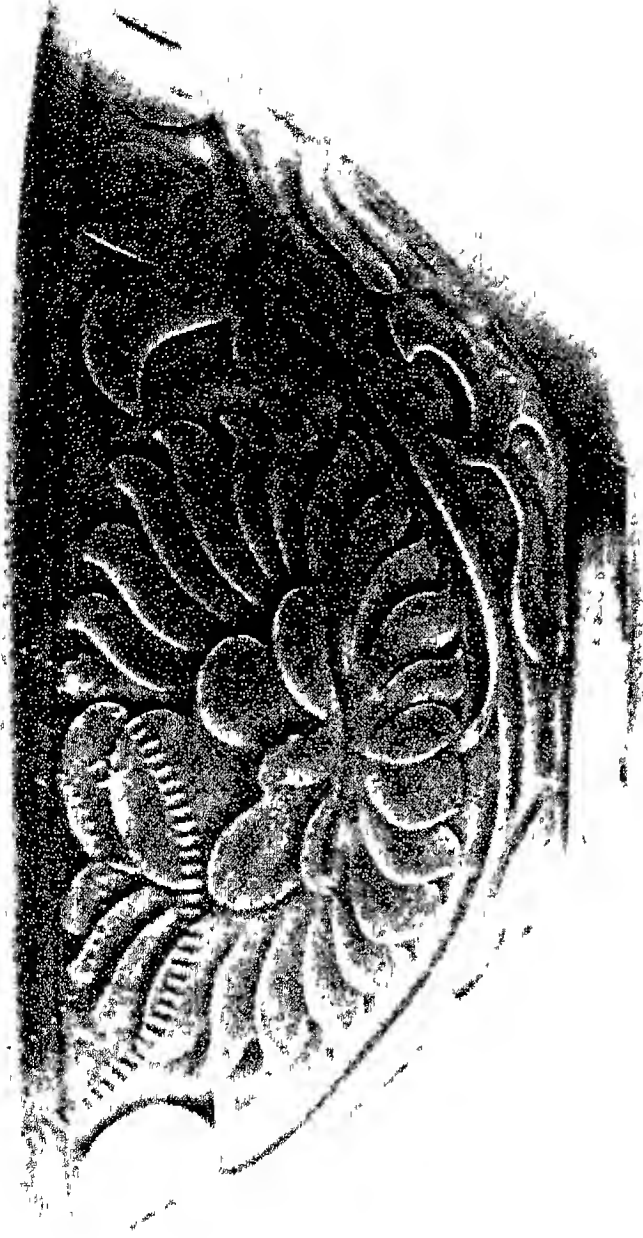


PLATE XX. Celadon Bowl. Mr. H. J. Oppenheim. (*See page 215.*)

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known groups. They seem to have made a universal appeal to the imagination and have inspired scores of compositions in words, paint, and porcelain. The distinguished painter Yen Li-pên is said to have excelled in the portrayal of these groups of monks or of scholars surrounded by their companions and servants, but many other artists hardly less famous and too numerous to mention followed his example. His ladies show the change from the light graceful ideal of Ku K'ai-chih to the round face and statuesque figure which is characteristic of Buddhist sculpture at the beginning of the T'ang period.

Li Ssü-hsün was descended from the founder of the T'ang dynasty and in addition to the commanding social position he enjoyed he earned the distinction of founding the Northern School of landscape painting. In his day the Ch'an (known in Japan as the Zen) Buddhist sect was divided into Northern and Southern schools, and the painters were styled Northern or Southern—after the two religious schools. A description of a branch of the Ch'an or Contemplative School states that its special object is:

'to teach that while self-improvement is hard, man has resources in himself to overcome all difficulties. This doctrine approaches to Confucianism, and the school is held in high esteem among the thoughtful classes in China, who despise the image worship—(. . . the Amidist or Lotus School)—of the ignorant multitude. . . . Some monks say that "Amidist teaching is Ch'an doctrine

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executed during Wu's tenure of this office, the most notable being landscapes, and wall-paintings for Buddhist temples, especially his favourite subject, the figure of Kuan-yin. The thirteenth-century Italian story of the marvellous draughtsmanship of Giotto, who amazed his fellows by drawing a perfect circle in one swing of the arm, is matched by the following Chinese tale of five hundred years earlier. When Wu Tao-tzŭ was painting the halo of a deity, 'everybody in the city of Ch'ang-an, old and young, learned men and common people, came out to see how he did it with a single sweep of the brush as by a whirlwind. The people said: "He must be aided by a god".' In another place his style is described as exceedingly free and bold 'like the rolling waves of the sea'. His works are known through the rubbings from stone engravings which in accordance with the old custom were still in use before the later method of making line-block reproductions and bound books began to take their place. Copies both by later painters and from engravings are housed in the museums of London, Paris, and Boston, and alleged originals exist in Japan. They endorse concurrent Chinese opinion as to Wu's dynamic power of conception and magnificent sweeping line. It seems, therefore, almost a paradox that his favourite subject was the gentle Kuan-yin. But may it not have been that the bitter experiences and final disgrace of his friend and master, the emperor Ming Huang, touched him to this oft-repeated expres-



Figures of a man and a woman. Period of K'ang Hsi
Porcelain enamelled on the biscuit
Dr. Leonard Gow's Collection

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sion of compassion? Ming Huang, the lover of scholarship and justice, the musician whose compositions were famed as 'universal music', patron of art and an Augustan age of literature, changed and became false to his better nature and his people. His failure, as with so many artists, was fore-ordained by his inability to resist the insidious demands of sense. His interest in right government was eclipsed by his passion for beauty and luxury. Finally he fell under the spell of the lovely Yang Kuei-fei. In his wild infatuation for her everything else was forgotten until the awakening came with the open insurrection of his subjects. The soldiers strangled Yang Kuei-fei before his eyes and drove him into the Western Wilderness to perish of grief and despair. Fate's travesty of the triumph which his high destiny seemed to foreshadow is seen in the literature of the time. For the very poets whom he encouraged wrote their most moving epics upon his downfall. The tragedy has also formed the theme of innumerable poems and plays onwards from the time of this classic age, an age during which lived the great poets Tu Fu, Li Po, and Po Chü-i. Po Chü-i, author of the poem at the head of this chapter, immortalized Ming Huang's tragic desire for the lady Yang Kuei-fei in a poem beginning:

His imperial Majesty, a slave to beauty,
Longed for a 'subverter of Empires';
For years he had sought in vain
To secure such a treasure for his palace . . .

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In translations of these poets' works we can see the same love of beauty and gentleness which irradiates some of the paintings and sculpture of the time. There is little doubt that Ming Huang's early reforms—his desire to spread happiness and justice throughout his kingdom—reflected the enlightened spirit of this age, and although it is true that religious persecutions occurred, they were organized from above, by statesmen with a political axe to grind or by rival factions of the priesthoods, not by the common people.

Wu Tao-tzŭ lived to serve later rulers as court painter. Perhaps his most famous picture was 'The Death of the Buddha', a large painting on one of the walls of a temple. Though not now existing, it is vaguely apprehended through later copies and a contemporary description. In magnificence it must have rivalled Tintoretto's vast mural painting, the 'Paradise', in the Ducal Palace at Venice. Wu Tao-tzŭ's composition shows the Buddha peacefully lying beneath a spreading tree while around him many thousands of figures, representing all creation, mourn his passing from them into Nirvana. The painter's last work was said to have been a huge landscape on one of the palace walls. When he finally drew aside the curtains and unveiled his masterpiece in the Emperor's presence, says the legend, he pointed to a cavern at the base of one of the mountains saying that a spirit lived there. Then he clapped his hands and the cavern gates opened.

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'The interior is beautiful beyond conception, continued the artist; permit me to show the way, that your Majesty may behold the marvels it contains. He passed within, turning round to beckon his patron to follow, but in a moment the gateway closed, and before the amazed monarch could advance a step, the whole scene faded away leaving the wall white as before the contact of the painter's brush. And Wu Tao-tsz' was never seen again.'¹

Tolerance and broad-mindedness were then the rule. The Nestorian Christians founded a church and left a monument of stone which has long outlasted their Faith. Muhammadans, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Manichaeans also sent missions to China and made many converts who lived peaceably beside the Buddhists and Taoists. The missionaries, as usual, were in the vanguard of the swelling stream of traders and ambassadors from the western world. The welding together of the Chinese empire had been followed by striking military successes in Asia, opening the way for a closer contact with both Asiatic and European civilizations than had ever before been possible. Envoys were sent by the Caliph immortalized in the *Arabian Nights*—Haroun al-Raschid. Fresh Hellenic influence was carried in from the West, with the result that echoes of a Grecian purity and symmetry are evident in the noble plastic forms, the pottery and sculpture of the period. But the increasing gentleness of spirit cannot be ascribed to the Greek artist nor to

¹*An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, Herbert A. Giles (Kelly and Walsh Ltd., Shanghai, and Quaritch, London), p. 53.

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the Christian missionary. These foreign influences though definite were slight, and of all the aesthetic and religious ideas that flowed into China during the T'ang period only the Hellenic, the Indian, the Iranian, and Muhammadan made any lasting impression. In Chapter III it was shown that the sayings of Lao-tzŭ, in the sixth century B.C., unfold the earliest Chinese conceptions of the doctrine of gentleness, and bear a remarkable resemblance in their principles of self-sacrifice, humbleness, and goodwill to the Beatitudes of Christ pronounced over five hundred years later. But Lao-tzŭ, like his great Indian contemporary the Buddha, was born before the world was ready for his ideas. Both teachings suffered much in later attempts to popularize them. Confucius followed, and though he discouraged many cruel and selfish practices he left, both in his living example and in his precepts, a strict ethical code which was somewhat lacking in the softer human qualities. Then, as now, there were sensitive spirits to whom the worship of the old gods and the customary shibboleths of the time seemed empty and meaningless and so to their need, as to the cry of the poet of ancient Egypt in 'The Song of a Man Weary of Life', merely moral precepts brought no help. In China, the deep, unsatisfied longing for release from pain and despair had to await the arrival of Buddhism. At the time of Christ's birth at Bethlehem a mission was on its way to China bringing the teachings of Buddha.

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But even his healing touch could not cure all the ills of suffering souls, and men began to turn more and more to another company of divine beings to satisfy the more homely, human need for an active intermediary or patron saint. These beings were the Bodhisattvas. Enlightened human beings also might ultimately be admitted to their company through becoming seekers after Buddha-^{Bodhisattvas} hood. Devotion to the acquiring of merit by charity and knowledge raised them through higher and higher planes of existence until they reached the condition of the Celestial Bodhisattvas, of whom the best known is called in India Avalokiteśvara, and in China Kuan-yin. These enjoy 'the highest beatification that the finite universe can give, and are only delaying their departure into the infinite stillness of Nirvāna in order to continue their works as loving guides and helpers of mankind towards happiness and spiritual sanctification'. Their gracious pose, their tenderness of expression perfectly disclose the gentle attributes of these celestial guardians. They became especially popular in China, where, in time, Kuan-yin was portrayed in female form and was known as the Goddess of Mercy. Thus the spirit of compassion latent in the Chinese character was first fostered by ancient ancestor-worship and the increasing sacredness of the family tie. Then, interpreted by Lao-tzŭ, disciplined by Confucius, idealized by the Buddha, it became at last each soul's personal link with the divine through

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the loving-kindness of the Bodhisattvas. For they, who had been sons of man, had ascended into the celestial company of the sons of God and guardians of humanity. They were called 'the sons of the Buddhas' and their title *Bodhi-sattva* meant 'creature of enlightenment'. And not only were they heavenly guides and protectors but examples reminding every man that he too might attain their condition by acquiring merit through knowledge and good works. So it was that love and pity found free expression in the art of this great era of China's history. As the figure of the Virgin irradiates mediaeval Christianity, so the cult of Kuan-yin flourished in Chinese Buddhism; but as yet no sign appeared of the lapse into a certain sensuousness and sentimentality of aspect which, in later centuries, accompanied the change from Kuan-yin the masculine symbol of compassion to Kuan-yin the Goddess of Mercy.

The Southern School was founded by Wang Wei, *Wang Wei* who was a courtier and a physician and *and the* famous equally as a poet and a painter. His *Southern School* pictures were painted with the chief aim of interpreting a mood, and his works gave rise to the school most prominent in later times called 'The Literary Man's Painting'. His designs were notable largely because of their unusual contrasts—one of the methods whereby he evoked the desired mood. The most famous were the much-copied blossoming fruit-trees standing amidst snow; but scarcely less

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famous were the marvellous landscape paintings—immensely long scrolls with panoramic views of still lakes, bordered by trees and winding into the valley depths of distant mountains. The descriptions by those who had seen these pictures, and the treatment of the same subjects by later artists, show to what heights this landscape art had already attained at a time when in Europe the fine arts were practically non-existent. Wang Wei, when a successful man, was in the habit of buying liquor which he neglected to pay for, and Han Kan, the pot-boy sent to collect the money, used to while away his hours of waiting at the artist's door by drawing horses in the dust. Wang Wei was so struck by the boy's capacity that he paid for his training as a painter and Han Kan ultimately became one of the great men of this period: he always excelled at drawing horses. One painting attributed to him has a universal attraction for visitors to the British Museum. (See Plate XV.) It is the vigorously executed picture of a boy in fur-trimmed coat and fur cap riding on a monstrous white goat. He represents a Boy-Rishi—one of the Taoist genii: a bird-cage is slung from a blossoming plum branch which he carries over his shoulder and he gazes round him at the spring flowers and the smaller earthly goats which frisk round the feet of his supernatural mount. Another famous painting, 'A Hundred Colts', is known through later woodcuts (see Fig. 12). Its animation and the magnificent design displayed in the gambols of these

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spirited horses remind us that the emperor was still receiving tribute of the large (Heavenly or Supernatural) steeds from Ferghāna, and was reputed to have thousands in his stables.

Three hundred other painters of the T'ang period are known by name, but limits of space forbid a detailed account of them. A few, however, should be mentioned: Chang Hsüan—famous for homely subjects and paintings of women, Wei-ch'ih I-sêng, and his less distinguished father, Wei-ch'ih Po-chih-na, who had come all the way from Khotan to work in China, the centre of civilization, and who introduced Central Asian types and technique. These, among hundreds of other scarcely lesser men, founded the greatest if not the most finished school of painting of the Far East. Their work, commanding in its noble simplicity, was full of joyous vigour—a quality sadly lacking in later art. Their influence spread to other lands but found its warmest welcome in Japan.

‘The Japanese look to China as we look to Italy and Greece: for them it is the classic land, the source from which their art has drawn not only methods, materials, and principles of design, but an endless variety of theme and motive. As in the late nineteenth century Japan took over the material civilization of Europe, so, more than a thousand years earlier, she took over and absorbed the civilization of China, its art, its religion, its thought . . . The first great school of painting in Japan derived entirely from the grand and forcible style of the masters of the T'ang dynasty.’¹

¹*Painting in the Far East*, Laurence Binyon (Edward Arnold, 1934), p. 8.

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The idealized figures of the Indian deities were accepted by Chinese painters and sculptors. *Indian* The most usual pose, that curious sideways *influence* tilt, as if the god were about to dance, was emphasized by the prominent hips and slim waist. Another pose which came from India was the attitude of royal ease or kingly repose, as it is variously called, much used in statues of Kuan-yin. This is more common in sculpture than in painting and it is typical of both the T'ang and Sung dynasties, and shown in Plate XXIV. The figure sits in relaxed, unconventional fashion, usually with the right foot brought up to rest on the seat of the throne and the right arm outstretched, hand down, and the forearm resting on the raised right knee. The left leg hangs in the usual manner of sitting figures, but the left arm is braced with the hand outstretched on the throne-seat to help support the body's weight as it leans away from the up-bent knee. But other poses now appear in great variety. In the main, types from India were the most popular, but the figures always have a Chinese aspect and cast of face, for no mere copying ever seems to have satisfied the native craftsmen. Bronzes were still in favour, so much so that quantities of coins were melted down to provide metal for casting images. Wood figures were uncommon for temple statues until later, and the numbers of fine examples now to be seen in all the principal museums and collections are generally of stone. They show a continuation of the earlier tendency towards

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slenderness and are entirely conceived in the round, with an astonishing success in displaying the curves of the body beneath the softly clinging horizontal curves of drapery. T'ang sculpture, taking the best from the Indian Gupta school, had become completely emancipated from the archaic and had begun almost to earn recognition as a fine art. Even the names of one or two outstanding craftsmen are known. But their work does not relate to similar figure sculpture of the early Italian Renaissance, which was more architectural and conceived as if with intention to emphasize the *planes* of the surface. Nor is the closest parallel seen in the masculine perfection of the Grecian classic age, but rather in the later, more rounded, and sensuous forms of the decline. In China the faces of the T'ang statues were less square than formerly, the eyelids were cut in parallel curves and the line of the lids was often continued towards the ears. An even richer array of jewelled chains and head-dresses appeared as time went on, while the skirts became longer and the method of carving the folds more complicated and ingenious. These folds were often looped up to show the beautiful lotus thrones which were now for the first time commonly used. Often they were mere pedestals carved in the form of an open lotus flower upon the centre of which the deity stood, but there were many varieties—all of them graceful and well proportioned.

The favourite Bodhisattva of this age was, as we

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have seen, Kuan-yin, and the favourite Buddha image was Amida, Ruler of the Western Paradise, who was usually shown seated, cross-legged, with his hands in his lap, lost in meditation. All these figures were originally coloured; traces of red, blue, and gold can still be seen upon them, with green and white upon the leafy sprays of flowers which they carry or which grace their thrones. Owing to imperial decree effigies of two other deities make their first appearance in every part of the empire. These are Vaisravana, a standing figure clad in armour, and Manjusri, generally shown riding on a lion. The former owes his popularity to the story that he appeared with a heavenly army in answer to the prayer of the emperor Hsüan Tsung and put to flight the barbarian forces. Manjusri, as the God of Wisdom, would naturally find favour in this age which glorified intellectual gifts and culture. All these figures and many more were to be seen in the numerous caves, of which the chief at this time were the rock-cut shrines of Kung-hsien, in the province of Honan, begun in A.D. 535 and continued to 867.

The late eighth and the ninth centuries saw a still greater richness and sophistication in glyptic art, when all the trappings and emblems were rendered with a voluptuous elegance.

*Persecution of
Buddhism,
A.D. 844*

But again resentment, fostered by the Confucianists, was rising against the power of the priests, and in A.D. 844 the most terrible persecution broke out. On

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three previous occasions during this period Confucianist statesmen had memorialized the throne indicting the Buddhists on various charges, and the followers of the religion, since the early years of the dynasty and its then unrivalled sway, had suffered much. Instigated by the Emperor Wu-tsung, who was influenced by Taoist advisers, the persecutors disbanded the communities of monks and nuns, turned back into money most of the bronze figures, and destroyed many thousands of temples and monasteries. From this catastrophe Buddhist art had not recovered when the T'ang dynasty fell, and although the religion was restored in A.D. 848 a period of decadence had set in. Wood, lacquer, and clay became the common materials, and expert copying of previous styles a usual thing. The glory of the Golden Age had departed, and incipient archaism, effeminacy, and over-elaboration marred all the expressions of religious art.

But before passing on to the next period an account *Pottery and Porcelain* must be given of a rapidly developing non-religious art. At the beginning of the chapter reference was made to the pilgrim I Tsing's memoirs and the evidence that true porcelain existed in the latter part of the seventh century A.D. The next witness is the Arab merchant Soleyman who in 851 wrote that 'there is in China a very fine clay from which are made vases having the transparency of glass bottles; water in these vases is visible through them,



PLATE XXI. Tiger by a Torrent in Rain and Wind. Attributed to Mu Ch'i (thirteenth century). Ink painting on silk. $60\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 33 inches. British Museum. (*See page 207.*)

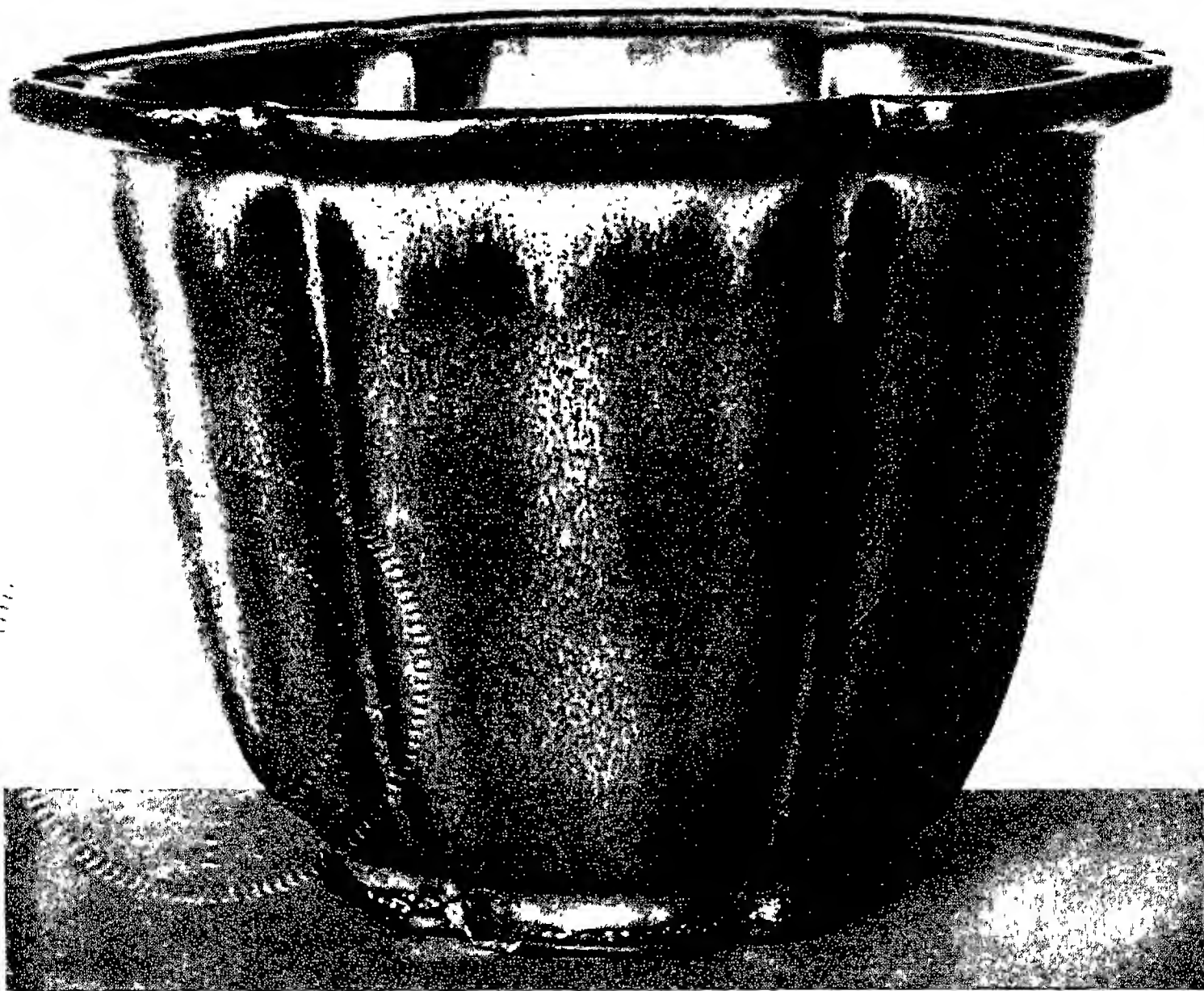


PLATE XXII. Flower Pot. Glazed pottery with splashes and flecks of strawberry red and bluish purple. Sung dynasty. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. (*See page 213.*)

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and yet they are made of clay'.¹ The Chinese records also note that vases of a thin, clay body of white and brilliant colour were made in a village near the now famous pottery town of Ching-tê Chên. They were called 'imitation jade utensils' and sent to the court as tribute. Similar wares came also from another village kiln. No authentic specimens are known to have survived in China itself, but, amazingly, shards have been unearthed half across the world at Samarra on the Tigris, the former residence of the Caliphs. These leave no possible doubt that true translucent porcelain was not only being made in China during the T'ang dynasty but was also exported to Mesopotamia (and possibly to civilizations farther west), and their exact date is fixed by the fact that Samarra was a city of mushroom growth, beginning and ending with the ninth century. Finds were first made by Dr. Sarre, who published a report on them in 1914. They varied in type considerably. One sort was of hard, shell-like, porcellaneous stoneware with an almost white body that could not be scratched by steel and yet was transparent in the thin places. Another find was a fragmentary oval cup decorated with a fish in relief, surrounded by wave designs and birds on the wing. The late Dr. Laufer, in his analysis of the Samarra find, said '... there is no room for doubt that the

¹This quotation and the notes in the rest of this paragraph are taken from *The Beginnings of Porcelain*, by Berthold Laufer, as previously acknowledged.

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piece in question is of real, white porcelain, and that it affords an example of the hitherto lost porcelain of the T'ang period'. And there were other types, some resembling the world-famous celadon which was previously thought to have been first made much later, during the Sung dynasty. True porcelain has also been discovered in Turkistan, but so far the finds are fragmentary.

The excitement aroused by these discoveries can be better understood when one realizes that this lost porcelain was an entirely new substance, more transparent, more beautiful than the rare white jade, yet wrought through the labour and ingenuity of man in China while Europe was still unawakened from the Dark Ages. Nearly a thousand years were to pass before Western civilizations were able to make porcelain, and even to-day none of their manufactures equal the finest wares of the Flowery Kingdom. The famous celadon was invented at this time, for there are several references to it in Chinese literature. There are no actual examples found in China though we have the specimens found at Samarra above mentioned, and there are in the British Museum several pieces of a contemporary Korean celadon taken from tombs of that country and period, which, concurrent Chinese writings state, closely resembled some of the Chinese wares.¹ From this time on Korean pottery owed much to Chinese example. Another indication of the inven-

¹*Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, R. L. Hobson (Cassell), p. 39.

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tion of porcelain is the reference in a tenth-century book on music which states that twelve cups were used as a type of musical instrument, and only cups of porcelain would be suitable for use as musical chimes ringing when lightly struck, for stone- or earthenware give out an unmusical or a dull sound of uncertain pitch.¹ These humbler products of the potter also show an astonishing advance. The typical T'ang pottery is soft and white. It was enriched still with the old Han green lead glaze, but also with new lead glazes, a favourite form being decoration spaced with strongly incised designs. Another favourite was an irregular splashing of coloured glazes, green, amber-brown, and violet-blue, on a creamy-yellow ground. This form of decoration was adopted in Persia.² Then there are the graceful wine-jars and ovoid vases with serpent-like scroll-handles, so Greek in form—vases that make one feel that pottery had already reached perfection. The brush was used in painting wares—although it did not become popular till the Ming dynasty—and stamped and applied reliefs were common. The Chinese admiration for the magnificent breed of horses from Ferghāna has already been noted, and it is therefore natural to find that the favourite, and one of the most beautifully rendered subjects, in sculpture, painting, and pottery was the horse. It appears in stone bas-reliefs from the graves of the

¹R. L. Hobson, *op. cit.*

²*Persian Art, Pottery and Glass*, Bernard Rackham (Luzac), p. 76.

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time and in the colossal winged horse recently unearthed in Shensi—relic of the monumental sculpture placed before the tombs. These were in the tradition current since the Chou dynasty, and were forerunners of the imposing avenues of statues which the Ming dynasty produced. But the most familiar examples are the mettled steeds of grave pottery. With arching necks, they champ and paw the ground, and though little more than a foot in length they give a vivid impression of curbed yet abounding energy. Many other animals were also modelled, the camel perhaps being the most convincing. The little tomb figures of actors, musicians, ladies, warriors, and a score of other subjects are very charming, but at the same time they serve to emphasize the curious Chinese bias in favour of animal sculpture. The human figures are treated with only a fraction of the loving care lavished on the horses and camels which they lead or ride. (See Plate XVI.)

There is, however, an outstanding exception. At least one group is known in which human figures modelled in clay rank as masterpieces both of sculpture and ceramic art. They are the famous pottery Lohan, and eight of the original sixteen are known to have survived. Of these the finest is in the British Museum. It is a little more than life-size, made of a hard white pottery and glazed in the usual colours of the time, green and yellow, with a plum blossom design on the borders of the robe. The figure is seated on a

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rock—the embodiment of stillness and timelessness. The face is awe-inspiring and the empty eyes seem to be gazing into eternity—one of the most marvellous representations of contemplation and aloofness that has ever been made. At the first visit to it one immediately feels a presence there, which afterwards remains with one and seems to fill the whole gallery. It would be hard to find a greater conception more nobly realized in the works of man of any age. (See Plate XVIII.)

In Chapter IV reference was made to the rarity of well-preserved textiles surviving from the period of four hundred years which elapsed *Textiles* between the Han and the T'ang dynasties. But from the seventh to the tenth centuries numerous examples have come down to us. As in the case of porcelain, it is to a writer of the rapidly expanding Arab civilization that we owe a record of the excellence of Chinese textiles, and to the discoveries of Professor Pelliot and Sir Aurel Stein that we owe some of the earliest surviving pieces. One was brought back from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-Huang and now hangs in the British Museum. The subject is the Buddha with Bodhisattvas and disciples. The interaction of Chinese art with that of Sāsānian Persia has already been mentioned. It is especially apparent in the virile hunter and wild animal *motifs* prevalent in Sāsānian metal-work and woven silks, which occur, almost unchanged, in Chinese stuffs of the T'ang period. Another Persian favourite was the vine, and,

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among other designs, one with interlacing tendrils, grape clusters, and leaves occurs as a circular band both in Chinese silks and on the backs of bronze mirrors dating from this time. (See Plate XVII.) With the Sung the empire was lost, and so close contact with Muhammadan inspiration and western Asia also vanished, and another interval of between three and four centuries lapsed without leaving to us important pieces.

It is sad to have to record that the closing years of this great period were marred by the *Decadence* general adoption of poor materials and the growth of the tendency to copy old models. A certain degeneration occurred in all the branches of art. The times were out of joint, and forgotten were the years which left their impress so far afield that the islanders of the Pacific Ocean still call the Chinese 'The People of T'ang'. This was the epoch which aroused the undying admiration of Japan and led her to the belief that it marked the zenith of Chinese civilization. The immediate cause of the dynasty's downfall was a rising instigated by a Turkic chieftain, but there were deeper and more insidious causes. The intrigues of the eunuchs and the schemes of unscrupulous empresses and ladies of the Court had for long undermined the original firm foundations of the dynasty. An unwieldy empire without a commanding personality to govern it was split into manageable areas resembling proconsulates which readily seceded and

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became satrapies. Each of these with its military garrison was a potential enemy of the central government, so that the situation exactly corresponded with that of recent years when China was divided amongst warring military (bandit) governors or *tuchuns*. It is therefore not surprising that this epoch closed with conditions similar to those which disintegrated the Han dynasty—confusion, civil war, and finally dismemberment of the empire.



FIG. 12. 'A HUNDRED COLTS'

A reproduction from one of the pair of original 16th-century woodcuts after the famous painting by Han Kan. (?) T'ang dynasty. (See page 187.)

From H. A. Giles, *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art* (Kelly & Walsh Ltd., Shanghai).

IX

THE SUNG DYNASTY, A.D. 960-1279

THE LOTOS-EATERS

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things? . . .

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

(TENNYSON, *The Lotos-Eaters*, Choric Song.)

After the fall of the T'ang came a period of unrest which lasted for half a century. In this short space of time five dynasties arose and fell. Conditions were inimical to any continuous development, although there lived two or three painters who have

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earned the praise of posterity. The early copies of their works show a refinement and a delicacy learned from the declining period of late T'ang art, and prophetic of the perfection of these qualities under the following period of the Sung.

The Sung dynasty ruled over the first highly civilized community of China—civilized, that is, in the modern sense. No longer was the struggle for existence the primary aim of life; no longer was it wise or necessary to go armed about one's legitimate, even one's peaceful pursuits. There was time and opportunity to savour the sweetness of life. Culture spread and art and literature flourished. Aesthetic development was remarkable, especially in the realm of methods of expression—a growth ripening into a distinctive philosophic and mystic art, fruit of the self-communion fostered by the Ch'an or Contemplative school of Buddhism.

The founder of the Sung dynasty had to win his way to power by the sword, but thereafter he maintained his ascendancy by the exercise of practical common sense and peaceful methods wherever these were possible. During the previous interval of unrest and confusion the foreign empire had been lost. Contact with central Asia and the West was thereby broken, and at the same time the incentive for continuing contact with India ceased with the eclipse of Buddhism in its land of origin. But Buddhism was now a Chinese religion and not in any way dependent upon the

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missions or the art *motifs* which India had in the past supplied. The Ch'an or Zen sect, the Contemplative school of Buddhism, which had affinities with philosophic Confucianism, was now in the ascendant and its influence found free expression in this age of culture and self-communion. Tendencies of such a peaceable nature were not, however, conducive to the realization of warlike aims, and perhaps they explain the disastrous failures to ward off the attacks of the northern Tartars. Ultimately the government was forced to retire to Nanking and watch with alternating apprehension and disdain their ancient enemies strengthening and consolidating a new kingdom in North China. Further defeats were in store, and finally the Sung court retired south of the Yangtse, dropping bribes as they went in continuation of the fatally foolish policy of buying off the invader. Nevertheless this was not an era of decadence and sensualism: it was rather an age of delicate and sensuous appreciation, of refinement and peaceful pleasures. It did not achieve military glory or a grandeur and nobility of artistic conception comparable with the T'ang, but it learnt from the T'ang and then developed by individual, contemplative ways its own distinctive and modern type of civilization. Perhaps this individual, introspective character of Sung art was responsible for the continued decline of sculpture and the pre-eminence awarded to painting. For the sculptor was essentially a craftsman working with the primary

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object of supplying religious statues, whereas the painter was a cultivated man who was not interested in practical affairs but who became supremely successful in the realm of pictured experience as opposed to naturalism. Essaying to see life through his eyes we find that for him art reveals the individual character, the inner meaning and spiritual essence of the thing or episode portrayed. His flowers are not photographic imitations of nature but are drawn to convey the essential attributes of the theme—purity, tenderness, and sensitive life. A landscape is not valued as a record of a place but as a means of recording the sense of grandeur and isolation with which the distant mountain peaks impress the artist, or the feeling of sadness that steals over him as he watches the early twilight fading above a marsh from which the last bird wings its way home.

A legacy of the T'ang period stands forth in the large nobility of paintings of the Bodhisattvas and the Lohan, but now their grand sweeping lines are sweetened by a suavity of colouring which was the special contribution of the Sung. In the field of landscape art an utterly different development appears, for this is also the great period of monochrome, a style of landscape painting which has remained the peculiar province of the Chinese to this day. This was the time when impressionism evolved—the impressionism which expresses the artist's emotion, which evokes his mood in the beholder and which

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we always associate with those aerial vistas called by the Chinese 'the mountain-water picture'. Their love of the country-side, the varied and beautiful face of their native land, has already been remarked upon. But it was the Sung artist who brought to his expression of the wonder and solemnity of the universe the profoundest depth of emotion and the highest technical achievement. In earlier years, when the time was ripe, the right man had always appeared to gather up the precious metal of past experience and forge it into links of wisdom which ever afterwards were to bind the future to tradition. It was so when the principles of calligraphy were pronounced: it occurred again when the portrait painter Hsieh Ho formulated his Six Canons of Painting. In the Sung period one of the great masters of landscape, Kuo Hsi, wrote his essay upon this branch of art, which, with the example of his pictures, was to mould the minds of all future artists. He deals not only with technique, the rendering of recession, the emphasis on the indispensable and the ignoring of detail, but also with the philosophic aspect and the individual artist's approach to his subject. And all this, it must be remembered, was more than five hundred years before the West had begun to appreciate landscape for its own sake, much less paint it or apprehend its potentialities as means of expressing intimate emotion and stirring emotion in others.

Small wonder, then, that this age has been regarded

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as the most highly civilized of any before or since, nor that landscape painting has been considered its most significant revelation. But though this was the most typical as well as the most popular there were other categories in the full range of their art. Of these the small paintings of birds and flowers rank only a little lower. Their exquisiteness at first blinds one to their vitality and power, just as their truth to the loveliness of nature sometimes masks for a moment the fact that they are marvellous compositions each with an individual and moving message. Unlike the fate of numberless masters in the West, the good fortune of these artists lay in the immediate understanding and acclamation of their works. And not only were they acclaimed by their fellow countrymen, for the Japanese were equally enthusiastic and to this day have preserved scores of the finest of the Sung masters' pictures. The favourites of the Japanese were not always equally favoured in China, since standards of taste differed in the two countries, but almost all the great names were unanimously honoured. In landscape there is Kuo Hsi, whose work has already been noted and whose paintings, though rare, still exist: some of the finest are in America, in the Freer collection, Washington, and in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Early in the period there were three other great names, Li Ch'êng, Fan Kuan—who is specially famous for wintry landscapes—and Tung Yüan, famous for landscapes and animals. Of greater re-

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nown are Hsia Kuei and Ma Yüan, whose work is especially prized in Japan, where many magnificent paintings by the latter are still preserved. But perhaps the most splendid of his richly filled landscapes is that in the Freer collection, while Hsia Kuei's masterpiece is the famous 'Myriad Miles of the Yangtse'—a scroll, thirty-eight feet long, in the National collection of China. Chao Ta-nien, Li Ti, and Ma Lin (the son of Ma Yüan) are painters whose work shows the realism associated with the Northern school, while Mi Fei was a critic and a painter who, with the rapid play of a full brush, painted tree-clad mountain tops soaring above misty hollows, creating a style which influenced the later Southern school. Mu Ch'i was more versatile, for he is famed not only on account of his landscapes in monochrome but for his pictures of Buddhist figures and of animals and birds. In Japan his works were much sought after and more survive there than in China. The large and well-known painting of a tiger which hangs in the British Museum is from his brush. (See Plate XXI.) Last in time but not least in fame comes Liang K'ai, who is known for his paintings of saints as well as of landscape.

Li Lung-mien was in the front rank of those famous for other than landscape work. Examples of those magnificent paintings of Lohan referred to at the beginning of this chapter are attributed to him. Another famous name is that of the Emperor Hui Tsung, many of whose paintings survive in European

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and American collections. His pictures of birds display the characteristics encouraged in the Academy founded by him and typical of the early period of Northern Sung, when small, naturalistic pictures of birds and flowers were popular. (See plate XIX.) Among innumerable other artists were Chao Ch'ang, a flower painter, and Li An-chung, who painted birds and who is represented by a small work in the Eumorfopoulos collection.

There is not sufficient space in an 'Introduction' in which to deal more fully with this, the second of the two greater periods of pictorial art in China, but those who wish to study finer aspects of the subject cannot do better than read Laurence Binyon's *Painting in the Far East*, a book distinguished by the masterly handling of its theme as by the lucidity of its beautiful prose.

Marco Polo, the Venetian, gives us the most fascinating description of the life and environment of the Sung capital after it had moved once again farther south. He visited it near the close of the epoch when, in the last effort to escape from their enemies, the Sung emperors had removed the court to the beautiful city of Hang Chou. Here in a setting of romantic loveliness, of graceful palaces reflected in still lakes and numberless marble bridges spanning its canals, this gentle and courteous people found for a time a haven from the northern Tartars. Wang An-shih, the one far-sighted statesman of energy and dictatorial temper



PLATE XXIII. Vase of Tz'ü Chou Ware. Sung dynasty. The decoration is painted in brownish-black on a creamy-white glaze. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. (*See page 219.*)



PLATE XXIV. Kuan-yin. Carved and painted wood figure seated in the attitude of 'royal ease'. Sung dynasty. The Eumorfopoulos collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. (*See pages 189 and 221.*)

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in the eleventh century, had come and gone and most of his reforms, though for a time highly successful, enjoyed an equally brief existence. His unpopularity was due not to the reforms as such (for they were logical, necessary, and practicable) but to the mere fact that he was a restless reformer. The spirit of the age was quietist and contemplative; it chilled at the touch of practical necessity and its gaze turned inward, shrinking from cold fact. Such matters as agrarian reform, state finance, and councils of war troubled the placid stream of existence—a stream that like the smiling waterways beside which their lives were spent might have flowed on, scarcely moving, for ever. This happy community felt no need of change, no sympathy with noisy, uncomfortable reformers. Life was already good. The common people were well cared for. Marco Polo tells us that there were hundreds of public baths supplied with warm water, assembly halls open to any who wished to entertain their friends, and many other amenities, undreamt of by our contemporary Norman conquerors, or even by our modern civilizations of the West.

The beauty-loving spirit of the age is reflected in the pottery and porcelain. The enthusiasm *Pottery and* of the craftsmen who experimented as with *Porcelain* a delightful new toy is seen in the extreme delicacy of such wares as the Ting. This was a shell-like, translucent white porcelain, of velvet-smooth surface. The goal of the potters was the gleaming translucency

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of white jade, and the later, more fragile wares, decorated with tenuous lotus sprays etched lightly under the glaze, closely approached its frail and pearly lustre. These were known as 'white' Ting. The Ming dynasty produced a similar but unrelated type of an exquisite, egg-shell fineness so thin that the walls seem to be made of glaze alone. They were called *t'o-t'ai* (bodiless) porcelain. Of the Sung types, bowls with wide mouth and narrow foot are the most common examples. The rim is often divided by slight foliations and the outside into six compartments by engraved lines running from the indentations at the rim, and sometimes the rims were left unglazed as they were frequently placed upside down in the kiln for firing. Afterwards the rims were bound with a thin band of metal, usually of copper, sometimes of silver and rarely of gold. There were two rather coarser types, the 'flour-coloured' and the 'earthy' Ting, but in all these the most distinctive characteristic is the occurrence of 'tear drops' in the glaze. These were caused by the collection of the glaze at points where its flow over the surface ceased. The ware takes its name from Ting Chou, the town where it was made in the early part of the dynasty. But this was only one of many types. Later a wide range of wares and a great variety of glaze-tints were evolved, and as methods and materials improved the body substance became finer, the glaze thicker and its hues more lustrous. This change was due to the discarding of the lead, used from the Han down to the

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T'ang period, in favour of felspathic glazes fired at a much higher temperature. Monochrome was preferred, and the colours were as pure as the shapes were simple. The most representative and satisfying are the Chün wares which were made at Chün Chou, in Honan. They were apparently in everyday use and were not much prized by Chinese collectors, but in the West they are especial favourites. This is largely due to their lovely colouring—some, *flambé* crimson, others, clear blue, often heightened by a splash of strawberry red or purple. The rich azure or lavender blue is softened by the nature of the thick lustrous glaze. The pieces were often small—bowls, jars, and flower vases—but the body was comparatively solid and heavy in both the 'porcelain' and the 'sandy body' or 'soft' Chün, as the two types are called. Possibly this was why it did not appeal to the connoisseur of the time (and this was an age of connoisseurs) for he demanded fragility and daintiness, ranking purity and suavity of form even higher than purity and softness of colouring. It was now that philosophy and historical research went hand in hand so that connoisseurship was the natural outcome in a people of such aesthetic maturity.

Archaeological discoveries aroused the *Archaeology* greatest interest and many important books *and the first printed* on the evolution of the arts were published. *catalogues* The dissemination of this knowledge was enormously assisted by the recent invention of wood-block

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printing. It quickly superseded the old method of engraving on stone and was followed by the rapid development of book printing throughout the Sung period and later by the invention of movable type. These innovations, of course, anticipated the work of Gutenberg and other printers in Europe and profoundly affected the spread of culture in China. Ssü-ma Kuang's great history and many magnificent catalogues and encyclopaedias were compiled. One of the most important was the *Po ku t'u lu*, the catalogue of antique bronzes in the Imperial collection, illustrated by woodcuts. Especial interest was taken in bronzes as the most typical and one of the most time-honoured forms of aesthetic expression. This interest continued, and later, a catalogue of the Imperial Collection, the *Hsi ch'ing ku chien*, included seventy-one categories of bronzes, and in this collection the numbers of specimens in each category sometimes reach into the hundreds. But the passion for collecting had encouraged the growth of
Connoisseurs a class equipped to supply any demand—fakers of old bronzes and forgers of ancient inscriptions. To their cunning are due the difficulties which beset the collector to-day, of finding, first, bronzes turned out by an honest Sung craftsman for everyday use, and, secondly, genuinely ancient bronzes which were not faked for sale by a dishonest Sung craftsman. These difficulties are enhanced because there had always been the occupation of casting bronzes whose

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design was founded on traditional models but which did not pretend to be antiques. Even to-day such are being made and sold. These are obviously new and without faked patina or forged inscriptions, whereas similar pieces made in the Sung dynasty are now obviously not new: they are a thousand years old and may have lain buried for the whole of that period and acquired a natural though fictitious appearance of an even greater age. In the same way famous paintings were copied and (at the time) were known as copies, but now it is almost impossible to distinguish between an original and a contemporaneous replica. Other forms of art such as carved jade, by their very directness and simplicity, lend themselves even more readily to expert imitation, and by their inherent nature, their immunity from the marks and ravages of time, create great difficulties of attribution.

Porcelain was a new achievement and therefore free from some of these disadvantages, but in time it too was copied both with honest and dishonest intent. The Chün wares described above unfortunately provide a comparatively easy and tempting bait for the expert potter. So, too, does the other product of the same kilns—the heavy vessels with brilliant *flambé* glazes whose colour in flecks and splashes ranges through bluish-purple to crushed strawberry—a type especially popular for bulb-bowls and flower pots. (See Plate XXII.) One, previously in a Chinese collection, has the following inscription incised under

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the base: 'The Chien-fu palace. For use on the artificial hill of rockery and bamboos.'¹

Celadon The origin of celadon during the T'ang dynasty was mentioned in the last chapter. It now became one of the favourite classes, partly because of the intrinsic beauty of its soft jade-green, sea-green, or green-grey tones, and partly because these tones are restful and harmonize so readily with other colours. The universal popularity of celadon is due to the achievements of two brothers named Chang who lived during the Sung period at Lung Ch'üan, in Chekiang. Wares made by the elder are called Ko and are exceedingly scarce, but those of the type made by the younger are well known. Deep bowls with a small foot, and flat dishes are the commonest shapes, but there were many others, especially in later times, for under the Yüan and Ming dynasties a large number of kilns continued to turn out a similar celadon but with a glassier kind of glaze. All peoples in all ages have admired this ware, so much so that the Chinese, when they realized it, developed a flourishing export trade, and examples have been found in places as far apart as Japan, the Philippine Islands, Borneo, India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and Zanzibar. In contrast with the dainty pieces for imperial use, pieces for export were made with very thick and heavy walls, and this fact has been pointed to as an example of the contempt the Chinese

¹*The Art of the Chinese Potter*, R. L. Hobson and A. L. Hetherington (Benn), Pl. 35.

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had for the foreigners with whom they traded. Bach, when he composed in the Italian manner, essayed something better than the Italians themselves, but (say these critics) the Chinese potter had no pride—cared nothing that foreigners should judge his skill by the coarse wares he sent them. This is an unfair criticism. Probably the chief reason for the comparative clumsiness of China's exported pottery was simply that the delicate wares made for home use would too easily have been broken on long journeys by junk and caravan. The first piece of China ware known to have been brought to England was a bowl of this celadon. This is Archbishop Warham's Cup, which was mounted in Tudor silver-work, and, since his bequest in 1530, kept at New College, Oxford. According to legend, these cups had the magical property of changing colour if the wine they contained was poisoned, and it is said that for this reason Saladin the Great always used one, thereby giving it the name by which we know it—celadon. A more probable origin is the complimentary use of the name of a popular stage personality of the seventeenth century—the green-clad shepherd Céladon. (See Plate XX.)

In the Sung dynasty ceramic art at last came into its own: it was prized for its intrinsic beauty and not primarily for its usefulness. The *Ching-tê Chên* great incentive to all this development was not foreign influence (because China had lost the outlying portions of her empire), but the influence and patronage

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of the emperor. The ruler and his court began to appreciate the beautiful wares and to collect them. The Emperor Ching-tê (1004-7) gave his name to the great pottery centre in the south and for centuries it has been known as Ching-tê Chên, the most famous pottery town in the world. This district, however, had been well known for its potteries long before: the earliest records even mention it as traditionally founded in the Han dynasty, so that we may assume that these kilns have been in operation for well over a thousand years. During the busy season the town is one of the most remarkable sights in China, though few people go there. There are over a hundred pottery kilns and a population of 400,000. Everybody and everything serves the pottery industry; the river bank is covered for miles with broken chips of china-ware and the town is built over similar debris, even the houses are built chiefly of fragments of fire-clay.

The site of Ching-tê Chên was chosen because *Kaolin and Petuntse* everything necessary for making pottery and porcelain happens to occur there. First, it is a good centre for export, connected by water with the great trade route of the Yangtse and with well-worn land routes to many of the principal cities. The river supplied water power for turning the primitive machinery of wheels, mills, and lathes, the forests gave abundant wood for firing the kilns, and in the hills around was fire-clay for building the kilns. But the most important factors of all were the huge natural

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deposits of china-stone (*petuntse*), which was the glassy flux, and of white china-clay (*kaolin*), from which the body of the ware was made. This kaolin was the same as the soft white powder which can be bought in any chemist's shop, and, curiously enough, it was used medicinally in China centuries ago for the same purpose, namely, as a remedy for gastric complaints. The natural deposits of kaolin have become world famous; they were even drawn upon for export to Persia when Chinese potters were sent there to found a Persian centre for making porcelain. The china-stone, or *petuntse*, is a felspathic stone by nature allied to kaolin. When the two are mixed together the china-stone acts as a flux and it is this action which gives pottery its translucency, turning it into porcelain. The early discovery of the properties of china-clay and the experiments which resulted in the manufacture of porcelain are said to be due largely to the Taoist hermits who practised alchemy. In those days alchemy was synonymous with chemistry, and the preparation of clays and glazes is, of course, also a matter of chemistry. Kaolin, or china-clay, is first mentioned in old Taoist books and was used as a medicine very early in the Wei period. The alchemist's quest for the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Life, and other figments of the imagination, therefore resulted in something entirely unexpected but of more value to humanity. On the other hand, Professor Sir Flinders Petrie is credited with the theory that early glazing on stone in Egypt

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may have resulted from the discovery of quartz pebbles which had been fluxed accidentally in a wood-ash fire, for this chain of circumstance would provide the essential process and materials.

The Sung potters were apparently the first to attempt to control the network of minute cracks in the glaze which goes by the name of crackle and which appears as an accidental feature on the Chün and some celadon, and on wares of earlier dynasties. Eventually they were able to produce this result and vary the spacing from small to large at will, and many pale-toned wares were apparently made with the intention of displaying this new and attractive feature. Many of the glazes of this time owe their soft effect to the innumerable microscopic bubbles of gas which are sealed up in them, a phenomenon induced by the very high temperatures at which the Sung potters learnt to fire these wares. This extreme heat had still other effects: for example, when a jet of smoke in the kiln reached the surface of a grey-blue or lavender glaze, the copper which was used to obtain these colours suffered a chemical change and a consequent change of colour, resulting in a red patch. The Chinese potters, however, were terrified by these mysterious marks like splashes of blood. They thought there was a devil in the kiln, and contemporary historians relate that they tore down the kilns and broke up the porcelain. Gradually they became used to the phenomenon and even in time learnt the cause and how to control it:

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the result we see in the eighteenth-century variegated *flambé* glazes. Increased knowledge and experimentation also produced the other varieties of blood-red glaze, the beautiful *sang-de-bœuf*, cinnabar red, sealing-wax red, and so on. But even late in the twelfth century a writer states that these furnace-transmutations—the red splashes—occur ‘when the planet Mars in the Zodiac approaches its greatest brightness, then things happen magically and contrary to the usual order’. Another class of Sung porcellaneous specimens is the Tz’ü Chou ware—usually white glazed stoneware with designs in brown or black, although red and green on a white ground is known and is one of the few types of polychrome painted decoration of the Sung dynasty. (See Plate XXIII.) Pillows made of this ware (legend states) are specially to be prized because he who sleeps on them will preserve clear eyesight. Tz’ü Chou might accurately be translated ‘Crock City’, and its products have been made for 1,300 years, from the Sui dynasty to the present day, but their conservative character makes it difficult to date them.

Scores of other types could be described, but a type which ought not to be overlooked is the Chien yao. Owing to the brown-flecked, black glaze, bowls of this type were called ‘hare’s fur cups’ and were in great demand as tea-bowls. They were especially popular with the Japanese, who called them ‘Tem-moku’ bowls, a word derived from the Chinese *T’ien-*

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mu. T'ien-mu shan, the 'Mountain with eyes in the sky', has twin peaks where the heavens are mirrored in twin pools. It was from a temple on this mountain that a Zen priest brought one of these bowls to Japan during the Sung dynasty and thus they found their name. The beautiful black and golden-brown glaze won immediate popularity, and the bowls were used for the tea ceremonies and contests of the time.

Another and perhaps the most lovely of all the Sung types was the *ying ch'ing*. In this the body of fine porcelain equalled anything which was afterwards made, and the specimens that have survived were, till recently, identified with the *Ju yao* which in Chinese literature is famed as second only to the legendary *Ch'ai* porcelain of which no trace has survived. The term *ying ch'ing* means 'shadowy blue', and Chinese writers have excelled themselves in the poetic phrases employed to describe the two types: 'blue as the sky after rain, clear as a mirror, thin as paper, resonant as a musical stone of jade'. It is not surprising, therefore, that this period, although so early in the history of porcelain making, is regarded by the Chinese as the greatest. Other types and forms of decoration, new colours and materials came into use but none excelled in sheer purity of form and hue, or in quality of porcelain, the finest wares of the Sung dynasty, the *Ju* and the imperial *Kuan*.

Sculpture, on the other hand, continued its decline. Never really regarded as a fine art but rather as a craft

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—a useful adjunct to religion—its decay was hastened by the use of perishable materials—clay, plaster, lacquer and wood. (See Plate XXIV.) Kuan-yin, seated in the attitude of royal ease, continued to be a favourite in this and the Ming period, usually *Sculpture* as a wood figure carved with rather softer and more sensuous lines than formerly. During the Five Dynasties and the Sung, Yüan, and Ming periods the making of images in bronze almost ceased. In contrast with the former practice of melting down coins to make images, bronze figures were now frequently called in so that they could be melted down and cast into money. It was this which developed the use of wood and clay for sculpture and which no doubt encouraged the fashion of painted banners as substitutes for the lasting materials. The Sung, Yüan, and Ming periods saw a revival of archaism. Old sculptures were copied, just as old bronze vessels were copied: the sculptor-craftsman looked back instead of forward and the spontaneity of the earlier periods was lost.

The Sung government, harried at first by the Kitan and then by the Kin, in their southern retreat enjoyed a false security based upon an alliance with the enormously powerful Mongol empire which had arisen in Asia and which now threatened the Kin. The Mongol hordes attacked, wiped out the Kin empire, and swept on to conquer the Sung. The boy emperor, the last of his line, escaped in the arms of one of his ministers; but not for long. The minister fled to the sea, but

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finding that all was lost drowned himself and his royal charge. The Chinese empire had fallen, and though nothing could have stemmed the tide of Mongol invasion, the Sung dynasty fell, an easy victim, through a too exclusive devotion to a war of words and the arts of peace.

X

THE YÜAN AND MING DYNASTIES, A.D. 1280-1644

THE IMPERIAL PALACE OF KUBLAI KHAN¹

A description written about 1275 A.D. by MARCO POLO, the traveller from Venice and the friend and envoy of Kublai Khan at Peking.

‘You must know that for three months of the year the Great Kaan resides in the capital city of Cathay. . . . In that city stands his great palace and now I will tell you what it is like.

‘It is enclosed all round by a great wall forming a square, each side of which is a mile in length . . . it is also very thick and a good ten paces in height, whitewashed and loopholed all round. . . . Inside this wall there is a second. . . . In the middle of this enclosure is the Lord’s Great Palace, and I will tell you what it is like.

‘You must know that it is the greatest Palace that ever was. The palace itself has no upper story but is all on the ground floor . . . the roof is very lofty and the walls of the Palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also adorned with representations of dragons (sculptured and gilt), beasts and birds, knights and idols and sundry other subjects, and on the ceiling too you see nothing but gold and silver and painting. On each of these four sides there is a great marble staircase leading to the top of the marble wall and forming the approach to the palace.

‘The hall of the palace is so large that it could easily dine 6,000 people; and it is quite a marvel to see how many rooms there are besides. The building is altogether so vast and so rich and so beautiful that no man on earth could design anything superior to it. The outside of the roof also is covered with vermilion and yellow and green and blue and other hues, which are fixed with a varnish so fine and exquisite that they shine like chrystal, and lend a resplendent lustre to the palace as seen for a great way round. The roof is made too with so much strength that it is fit to last for ever.

‘Between the two walls of the enclosure which I have described there are fine parks and beautiful trees bearing a variety of fruit. There are beasts also of sundry kinds, such as white stags and fallow deer, gazelles and roebucks and fine squirrels of various sorts, with numbers also of that animal that gives the musk, and all manner of

¹*The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, translated by Sir H. Yule (Murray).

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other beautiful creatures, insomuch that the whole place is full of them . . . and the Great Kaan has caused this beautiful prospect to be formed for the comfort and solace and delectation of his heart.'

The Mongols now ruled with a savage discipline one of the largest empires ever known. It stretched across Asia from eastern Europe to the Yellow Sea and enrolled China in its list of subject states. But once more the Chinese genius for assimilating conquerors showed itself. Within a remarkably short space of years the Mongol (Yüan) dynasty was employing the vanquished people in all sorts of posts, and before the end of their century of rule the Chinese civilization was again in the ascendant. Kublai Khan showed himself to be a wise as well as a powerful ruler, encouraging the unbroken sequence of Chinese traditional culture to such effect that it is often impossible to distinguish between the ceramics and other productions of the Sung and Yüan periods. But another aspect of the Mongol supremacy was the outflow of art *motifs* from China—for instance, the lotus and the Chinese dragon now begin to decorate Persian pottery. The outstanding event of the time, therefore, is not any change in the stream of tradition but rather the spread of its influence over a wide area of Asia, through the expansion of the empire, and its ultimate effect on Western culture.

Of Kublai Khan's exploits as conqueror, as ruler, as builder, so much has been written that little more

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need be said. The writings of Marco Polo have just been quoted, and it is to this indomitable and observant Venetian that we owe our most vivid pictures of a China which at the end of the thirteenth century was far more highly civilized than Europe. The 'stately pleasure dome' at 'Xanadu' which Coleridge attributed to the Great Khan was probably the Bamboo Palace of the Sung emperors which he ordered to be taken down and re-erected there. Although this palace has not survived, other monumental works of the period still exist, among them the splendid three-sided archway through the Great Wall erected about 1345. The fearsome aspect of the sculptured guardians that watch over this gateway recall that Kublai Khan was a Buddhist who practised Lamaism, the barbaric Tibetan form of the religion; but they also show that fine stone reliefs were still sometimes carved in this decadent and imitative age. The Yüan dynasty is famed, however, more for the development of the drama and the novel than for any great achievement in the realm of art, although the names and works of a number of painters are known.

The last of the painters described in the chapter on the Sung dynasty flourished in the south during the thirteenth century. But although the Southern Sung had retired before attack they were still harried by their warlike neighbours until the Mongol invasion, which had swept across Asia, had spent its fury in that last conquest and had been itself engulfed in the un-

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sounded depths of Chinese tradition. The most celebrated painter of this time was Chao Mêng-fu who was descended from the founder of the Sung dynasty and who, commanded to attend the Mongol court, eventually became a friend of the emperor. Horses were this painter's favourite subject, but his work has been so much copied and his name so often forged that it is difficult to distinguish which of the many paintings attributed to him are genuine. One of the most famous was called 'Eight Horses in the Park of Kublai Khan' and many copies of this also are in existence. The British Museum has one of his finest compositions, again a study of horses. Another renowned painter of this period was Jên Jên-fa who is represented in the Eumorfopoulos collection by the picture 'Feeding Horses in a Moonlit Garden'. Many other painters who lived during the Yüan dynasty left examples of their work which are now well-known exhibits in the principal museums of Europe and America. Their style in the main followed and intensified the naturalistic trend of the late Sung tradition, but lacked its vitality, and artists soon began to pay a too self-conscious attention to the technique of their craft.

At this date Chinese painting began to influence the art of two other nations. Partly, no doubt, through the encouragement of Kublai Khan who, as we have seen, professed the Tibetan form of the Buddhist religion, Lamaism, the typical banners and other mani-

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festations of barbaric Tibetan art soon showed the refining influence of Chinese conceptions. At the same time Persian painting came under this influence, again through the agency of the Mongol dynasty, for the conquests of Genghis (Chingiz) and Kublai Khan had united Persia and China under one suzerainty. In later years this interchange of influences was renewed as an indirect result of the campaigns of the most barbarous of all conquerors, Timur, who is perhaps better known as Tamerlane.

Chinese silk weavings were now being imported by Western civilizations, and green, pale blue, and buff damasks, some with floral designs and Chinese characters combined with Arabic inscriptions, have been unearthed in Egypt. Other remnants include woven silks and brocades brought to the West by traders and still preserved in the churches of Europe. In addition, the direct impulse given by Chinese craftsmen to western Asian and European design can be seen in the ornament on textiles made in the West at this time. With the contraction of the empire under the following (Ming) dynasty these impulses ceased and they were not renewed till over a century later. Then, with the arrival of Portuguese traders, Chinese art was rediscovered. A flourishing traffic in porcelain, silks, and rugs gradually grew up and European craftsmen redoubled their efforts to copy Chinese designs.

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From the trend towards academic interest in technique under the Yüan dynasty it would be natural to infer a hardening of this tendency under the Ming. And this hardening, crystallizing at last into convention, ultimately took place, but in the opening years it was held in suspension by the triumphant spirit of patriotism. The expulsion of the Mongols and the founding once more of a native dynasty seemed to uplift the nation's heart so that the inevitable decline was for a time arrested. In the interval displays of magnificent richness were the rule, as if art were reflecting the joyous pyrotechnic celebrations of a liberated people. This grandeur and gaiety of bold curvilinear forms and the burning intensity of colouring are seen more immediately in the polychrome porcelain, but they glow too with scarcely less brilliance from the paintings. At the same time there was at first a school which practised definitely and successfully in monochrome, continuing the tradition and within the limits of the earlier refinement and delicacy of the Sung. To this group belong many famous names, among them Lin Liang, Wang Li-pên, and Wu Wei. Wu Wei's magnificent sweeping design, 'The Fairy and the Phoenix' hangs in the British Museum, and is illustrated here in Plate XXV. The later school, distinguished by the richness of colouring which is more typically Ming, seems to aim first at decorative effect—the romance of nature, not the spirit of nature.



PLATE XXV. The Fairy and the Phoenix. Painting by Wu Wei (A.D. 1458-1508) in ink, lightly coloured, on silk. 58 inches by 37½ inches. British Museum.

The Yüan and Ming Dynasties

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The Ming Dynasty,
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PLATE XXVI. Porcelain Jar. Painted on the biscuit in coloured glazes within raised outlines. (Turquoise blue, buff, and white on a dark blue ground.) Ming dynasty. Victoria and Albert Museum.

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Wên Chêng-ming was a painter in this style whose vision embraced a wider horizon. He, and many scores of others, lived and worked during this flourishing period in China's history. But side by side with the new and more gorgeous colouring and new varieties of subject, continued the traditional ones. Pictures of birds and flowers and landscapes, portraits and Buddhist figures, groups of women and children—genre paintings which reveal the gaiety and charm in the daily life of the time—all are represented in numerous examples housed in museums all over the world. One of these perennially attractive pictures is 'The Earthly Paradise' in the British Museum. It has, like the ceramic statue there of the Buddhist Lohan, an irresistible magnetism, but for very different reasons. The latter draws its votaries by its atmosphere of power and austere serenity and the sheer genius of a mortal sculptor whose work can still evoke for us the semblance of a living presence. The former invites us to delight again in the ever-renewed pleasures of a vernal country-side in which a charming company disport themselves—age and youth set in a landscape of romance and ethereal beauty. It is sad to reflect that an artist who could paint so delightful a scene did not found a school to carry on and develop a style, free, flower-like in its colour harmonies, and fresh as the spring-time. But the fatal disposition of the Chinese towards pedantry, the looking back rather than forward, was already visible. The Ming period closed in

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conservatism marked by a decaying vitality brought about by the too assiduous copying of old work. Tradition once more had fastened its grip on art. The Manchu conquerors ultimately forced the Chinese to wear the pig-tail as a badge of slavery—it might also be taken as a symbol of their future slavery to tradition in the realm of painting.

The full-bodied, sturdy shapes of Ming porcelain *Pottery and Porcelain* and their gorgeous colouring are signs of the prosperous community which produced them. From the busy factories early in the period the typical vessels were large wine jars of bold outline, tall flower-vases and bowls, their surfaces richly flooded with a variety of harmonious glaze-colours. The curving outlines of the floral or other designs were strongly marked by different methods: one of these, used in the T'ang dynasty, was the scratched line which emphasized the drawing but which also formed a miniature 'ditch' successfully separating two different fields of colour. Another method was to lay down a miniature boundary along these outlines in the form of a narrow thread of clay, the glaze pigments were then laid in directly on the unglazed body or 'biscuit'. Yet another group had flower sprays in relief which raised the decoration slightly above the ground and so made it easy to separate the different colours applied to the decoration and the background. The porcelain trade under the Ming dynasty had begun to prosper, and while many new developments occurred the now

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traditional types such as the Ting, Chün, Tz'ü Chou, and celadon were also produced. The fragile white egg-shell Ting was almost the only class of traditional wares in which the Ming potters improved much upon the technique of previous centuries, possibly because white was almost the only monochrome in which they were interested. In the main, fashion had veered towards richness of colouring and striking effects in decoration, and as the court now carefully controlled the output of the imperial porcelain factory at Ching-tê Chên its ideas of regal splendour strongly affected the potter's craft. About eighty per cent. of all the pottery made in China now came from the factories there, and the craftsmen were spurred on to greater efforts by their tyrannical patrons. For the native dynasty, which had been welcomed with patriotic fervour, before long proved itself to be a harsher task-master than the Mongol barbarian Kublai Khan. Its unreasonable demands can be seen in the size of the fish-bowls, barrel-shaped seats, and other heavy wares which were almost too large to fire successfully. Their painted decoration introduces the first extensive use of cobalt, which afterwards was to have such an unhappy effect in the later developments of the well-known blue and white porcelain. The ease and cheapness with which these painted designs in blue were made led to the abuse of the method and to the tremendous output of roughly finished, poorly designed pots of the last hundred years. But in early days many

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charming effects were obtained, and it must not be forgotten that then only a consummate artist was thought worthy to work in the new technique, for an even greater mastery of the brush was necessary than in painting on a flat surface. And added to the handicap of the biscuit's curving surfaces was its absorbency—more thirsty even than soft paper—so that every stroke, once drawn, was fixed beyond the possibility of alteration or erasure. An incentive to the development of blue and white was the occasional importation of Persian cobalt of an extraordinarily rich colour. 'Mohammedan' blue, as it used to be called, was new to China and, since it had the deep pulsating brilliance of the unrivalled Persian faience of this period, was infinitely superior to the native cobalt, which was apt to show a greyish tinge. In return the Persians borrowed ideas from China and in their imitations they outlined their dark blues delicately with black. The breadth and dignity of design combined with skilful drawing in this colour render the blue and white of the Ming superior to the later, and in technical perfection, more sure and sophisticated productions of the following (Ch'ing) dynasty.

But perhaps most typical of the time were the
Enamels enamels; they were usually painted upon blue and white porcelain. Rare examples occur in the Sung dynasty, but it was not till the Ming period that their gem-like colour range was fully appreciated. Of the two principal types those applied direct to the

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biscuit were known as 'three-colour' (*san ts'ai*), and those painted over the white glaze were called 'five-colour' (*wu ts'ai*), but in neither case is the selection of colours so strictly limited as the names suggest. The last group included turquoise green, one of the tints perfected by the Ming potters and a great favourite among them. The use of glass-enamels on metal was referred to earlier in this book as an instance of one of the few arts which seem to have been discovered and appreciated first in the West and exported to China comparatively late. It was through her contact with Byzantine civilization that the great Chinese empire of the T'ang period first learnt many new things which were already old in the West. Among these was the art of enamelling on metals. This new art probably influenced the use of enamels on pottery which (as already mentioned) developed during the Sung dynasty but did not achieve great popularity then. There were two main classes: *champlevé*—in which the metal was scooped out to make a series of shallow depressions which were afterwards filled with a finely ground paste of the glassy material, and *cloisonné*—in which the design on the copper or bronze vessel was outlined in metal wire soldered to the surface, and the shallow compartments (or *cloisons*) thus made filled in with the enamel-paste. To keep the thin layer of paste firmly attached to its shallow metal trough they used a highly adhesive glue made from the root of a water plant, and this (being a vegetable

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glue) carbonized and left no trace in the subsequent firing. In both *champlevé* and *cloisonné* the concluding stages of the process were the same. The vessel or other object, after the coloured paste had been laid in, was baked in a miniature kiln or stove until the paste had set. Then it was withdrawn and allowed to cool, and the newly hardened surface of variegated enamels, divided by the just visible outline (the upper edge of the copper wire) was burnished on an emery wheel. Finally the whole vessel, enamelled surface and exposed metal top and base, was highly polished, or perhaps gilding was added where copper or bronze rims were not considered a sufficiently fine foil to the richness of the surface decoration.

The Yüan dynasty favoured this craft, the Ming still more, but it never attained the heights it reached in Russia or in Italy during the Renaissance—still less the popularity now enjoyed by the Limoges enamels. The rich effects obtainable with *cloisonné*, however, appealed especially to the Ming taste, and most of the finer work belongs to this period. It is distinguished by a certain luminosity and purity in the hues obtained—a charm which later disappeared as (during the Manchu dynasty) the craft became more stereotyped and mechanical, the *cloisons* less beautiful and finely made, and the colours harder and denser in effect.

In porcelain another new colour was the *chi hung* or 'sacrificial' red. This was not only used for drawing designs on the biscuit (under the glaze) but often in

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the glaze itself, giving a deep yet brilliant blood-red hue. Like so many of the gorgeous colours of the time it owed its origin to copper and was related to the crushed-strawberry splashes which, as we have seen, sometimes occurred accidentally in the lavender blue of the early *Chün* wares. The most brilliant of the reds which now developed, the deep ruby glaze, was actually believed to owe its colour to the use of rubies ground up to form the glazing material. But, in fact, such treatment would of course have ensured the loss of the distinctive colour immediately such a glaze was exposed to the great heat of the kiln. However, the 'precious stone red', as it was called, may have owed its brilliance, though not its colour, to the admixture of another and less precious stone, the cornelian, and this theory would account for the origin of the ruby legend.¹

In the latter part of the period a new and very lovely white porcelain was made in Fukien, and called by that name, but later it was given by the French a name perhaps more familiar to us, *blanc de Chine*. One of the favourite subjects in this milk-white ware is Kuan-yin, now accepted and modelled no longer as a god but as a Goddess of Mercy, and very closely resembling in type European figures of the Virgin. This impression is increased by all the details of the goddess-figure—the shawl head-dress, the long rosary-like necklace, sometimes by the compassionate expression of face,

¹*Early Ceramic Wares of China*, A. L. Hetherington (Benn).

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and often by a small child-figure shown in her arms. Although other forms were made, figure work most delighted the Fukien potters and shows their achievement at its highest. The tradition is still carried on and both modern and earlier productions of this flourishing industry are in every detail almost identical.

*Architecture
and
Sculpture* The fine sculptural quality of the Fukien porcelain figures leads naturally to the consideration of the larger relics of the sculptor's art. (See Pls. XXVII and XXVIII.) The chief are the colossal stone statues of the Ming tombs, the ruined but still imposing avenues of figures guarding the approach to the last resting-places of the emperors. Fine as they are they do not bear comparison with the nobility of T'ang heroic art. Harsh and dominating in execution and aspect, they illustrate the gulf which divides the docility of the Sung temperament from the virility of the Ming. The third emperor of the dynasty transferred the capital from Nanking to Peking and endeavoured to rival the earlier splendour that city had displayed under Kublai Khan. Tyrannical despotism shows along the face of the gigantic battlemented outer walls and the vast palace enclosures. The Forbidden City and most of the monumental architecture of Peking, the brick façades enclosing mile-wide sections of the Great Wall, the imperial tombs laid out across the valleys, all owe their impressive grandeur to the dominating force and ruthless oppression of Yung-lo and despots like him.



PLATE XXVII. Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy. Small seated figure in white Fukien porcelain—(*blanc de Chine*). 17th or 18th century. Victoria and Albert Museum.

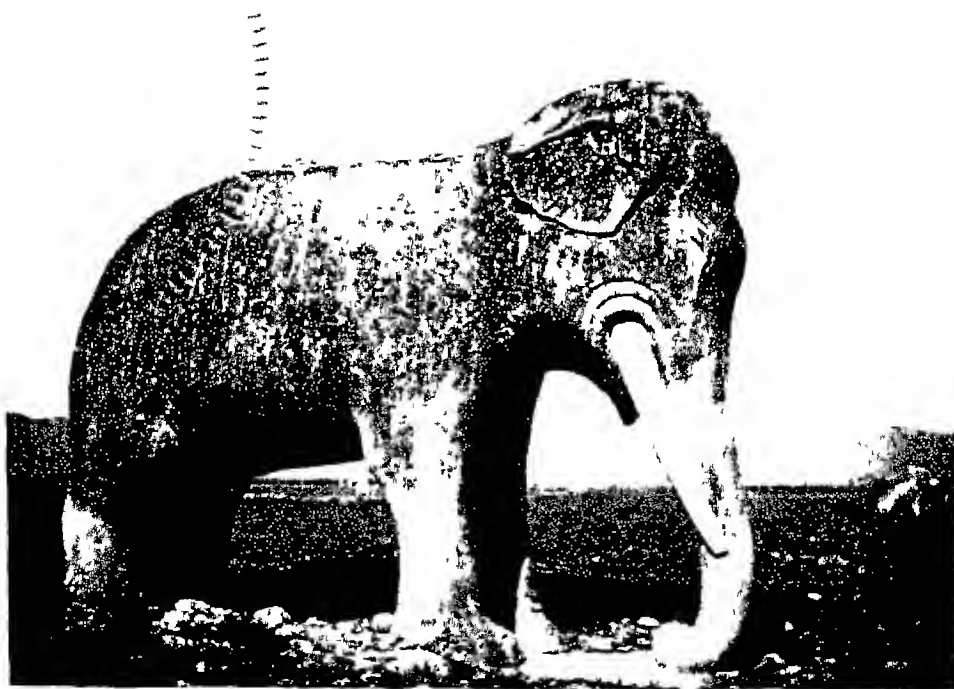


PLATE XXVIII. Figures from an Avenue of Colossal Stone Statues at the Ming Tombs.

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The patriotism which had fired the people to flock to the standard of a rebel Buddhist priest—the ‘Beggar King’—and to overwhelm the Mongols, had then raised the native dynasty to power. But the first Ming emperors soon quenched this patriotism with oppression and savage massacres designed to crush opposition to an entrenched and absolute monarchy. The vast buildings of this time call vividly to mind the blood and tears which must have dripped upon their frowning walls. Their massive timber columns still stand as if defying the attacks of time and tempest which have swept away all or almost all the architecture of earlier ages.

But while bloodshed and oppression darken the pages of the earlier history of the dynasty, a superficial brilliance and effeminacy mar the close. The rise to power of the eunuchs, and the consequent intrigues and degeneracy of the court, aroused resentment and eventually insurrection amongst the people. The ultimate collapse of China’s sea-borne trade had been foreshadowed by the arrival of Portuguese ships and merchants at Canton in 1517, followed by the Dutch and the English. The Jesuit fathers arrived and were well treated at court, and the last Ming Emperor and the Dowager Empress embraced Christianity. China was now in closer touch with Western civilizations, their scientific progress and belligerent trading methods, and already the seeds of friction were being sown by the clash of foreign interests in the Pacific colonies of

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the Chinese Empire. The shadow of fresh invasion from the north crept almost unheeded across this empire—racked as it already was by foreign interference and civil war—and the Ming dynasty fell, leaving to the powerful Manchus the task of quelling insurrection which it had failed to perform.

Description of Fig. 13.

From the doors of a shrine in the temple, Lin Ngai Ssü, near Kuan-hsien, Ssü-ch'uan. ? 17th century. Monsters among foliage surrounding a conventionalized *Shou* character, meaning 'Long Life!' Used in decoration much as messages of goodwill like 'Pax Vobiscum' were sometimes incorporated with the design in the Gothic carvings of Europe. Carved in hardwood, with traces of colour—red, blue, and white. Measured and drawn on the spot by the Author.

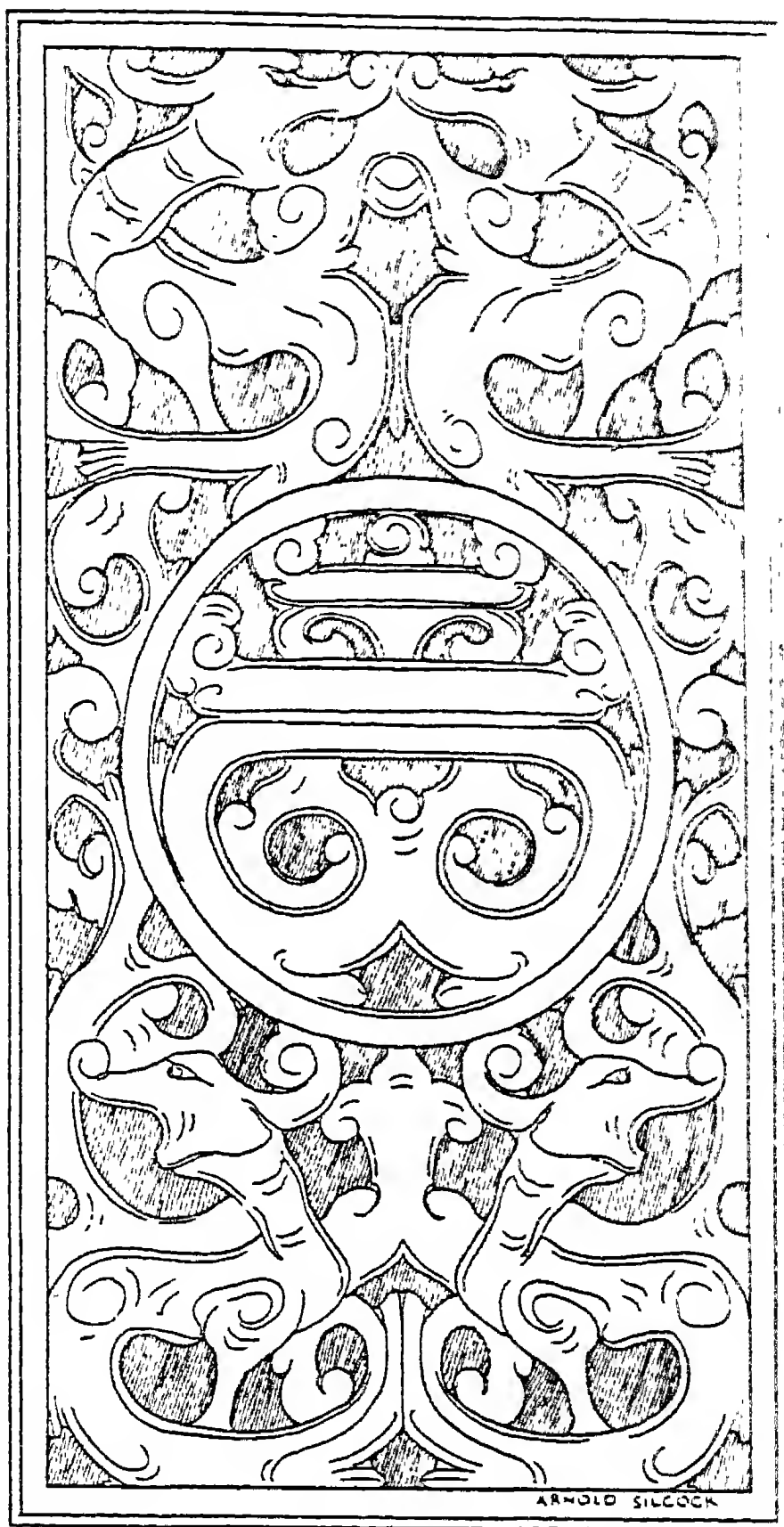
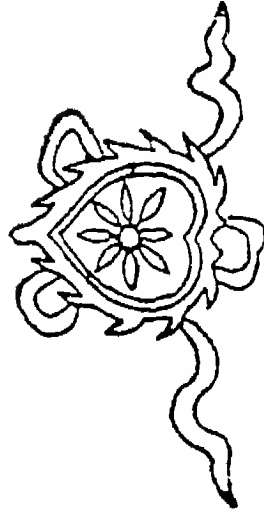
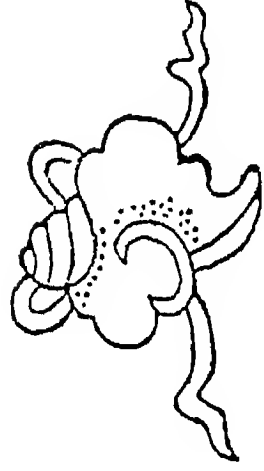


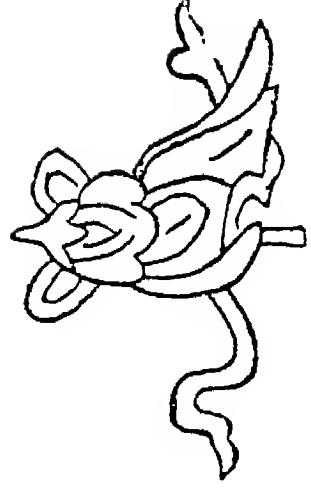
FIG. 13. ONE OF A PAIR OF PIERCED
UPPER DOOR PANELS



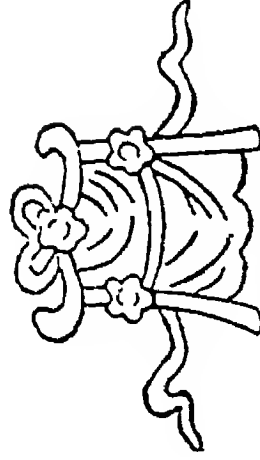
Lun. Wheel, enveloped
in flames.



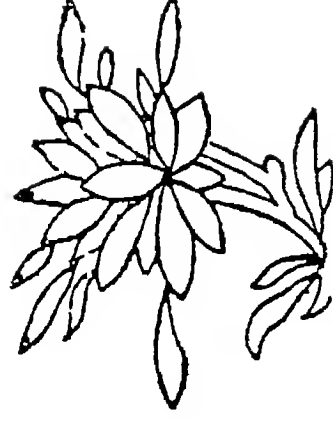
Lo. A Conch-Shell.



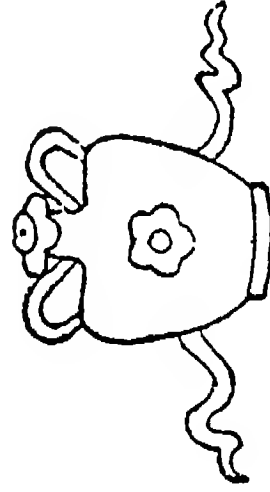
San. State Umbrella.



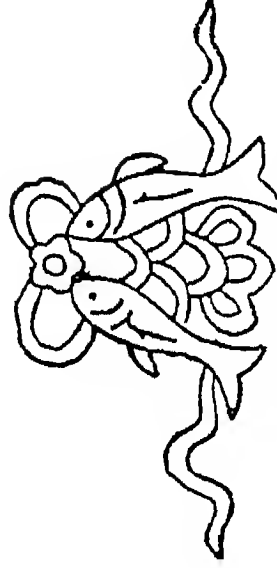
Kai. Canopy.



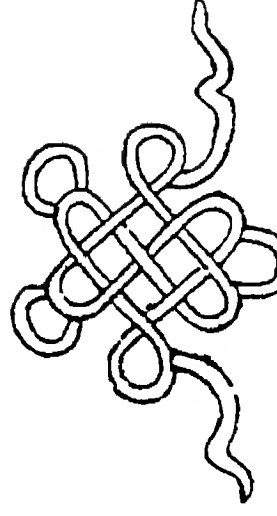
Hua. Lotus Flower.



P'ing. Vase.



Yü. A Pair of Fish.



Chang. 'Entrails.' An
Endless Knot.

FIG. 14. 'THE EIGHT BUDDHIST EMBLEMS OF HAPPY AUGURY'

Special favourites in many kinds of decoration.

From S. W. Bushell, *Chinese Art*, vol. ii. By permission of the Controller of
H.M. Stationery Office.

XI

THE CH'ING DYNASTY, A.D. 1644-1912

ELABORATION AND ECLIPSE

O World! O Life! O Time!
On whose lost steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—O never more!

SHELLEY.

The new invaders came from Manchuria, where for many years a confederation of clans had been steadily growing in power and ambition. They claimed descent from the Kin Tartars, the tribe which a few hundred years before had driven the Sung government south of the Yangtse and which had in turn been overwhelmed by the Mongols. Now, for the second time in history, they attacked, and successively defeated three Chinese armies and were only stopped at the fortified frontier. Then they turned upon and conquered the remnants of the Mongol peoples. After this they began seriously to entrench their position and to model their culture and system of government on the Chinese pattern. In the meantime, in 1644, the Ming dynasty was threatened by a revolt so menacing that the loyal faction called in the help of the warlike Manchus, who crushed the revolt but claimed the throne as their reward. After many years, in which sporadic risings in support of the Ming princes were put down with the utmost severity and

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Père d'Entrecolles wrote fully on the methods of manufacture, and this, combined with information from Chinese sources, has been admirably summarized by Mr. R. L. Hobson, of the British Museum, as follows:¹

*How porcelain
was made*

‘Both the clay and the stone passed through drastic purification at the factory before they were made up into a dough-like mass ready for the potter. The glaze was a mixture of china stone and burnt lime and fern ashes, the superior qualities of glaze containing a higher proportion of the stone.

‘In preparing the ware, moulds were used for the shapes which required them, but rounded objects were “thrown” on the wheel. If the vessels thus formed were to be decorated in blue, they were now ready to receive the colour which was applied to the dried porcelain body. The blue material (cobaltiferous ore of manganese) was collected on the hills of Shao-hsing and Chin-hua in the province of Chekiang. It had to be roasted, crushed to powder and laboriously refined before it was fit for use. It was then mixed with water and painted on with a brush. The next process was the application of the glaze, either by immersing the vessel in a tub of liquid glaze or by spraying the glaze on through a tube. The older process of painting the glaze on with a large brush was now little used. The final processes in the preparation of the rounded ware were the trimming of the foot which had been left rough for handling, and the writing and glazing of the mark.

‘The formed, painted, and glazed vessel was now ready for the supreme operation of firing; but to protect it from

¹*The Later Ceramic Wares of China*, R. L. Hobson (Benn), 1925.

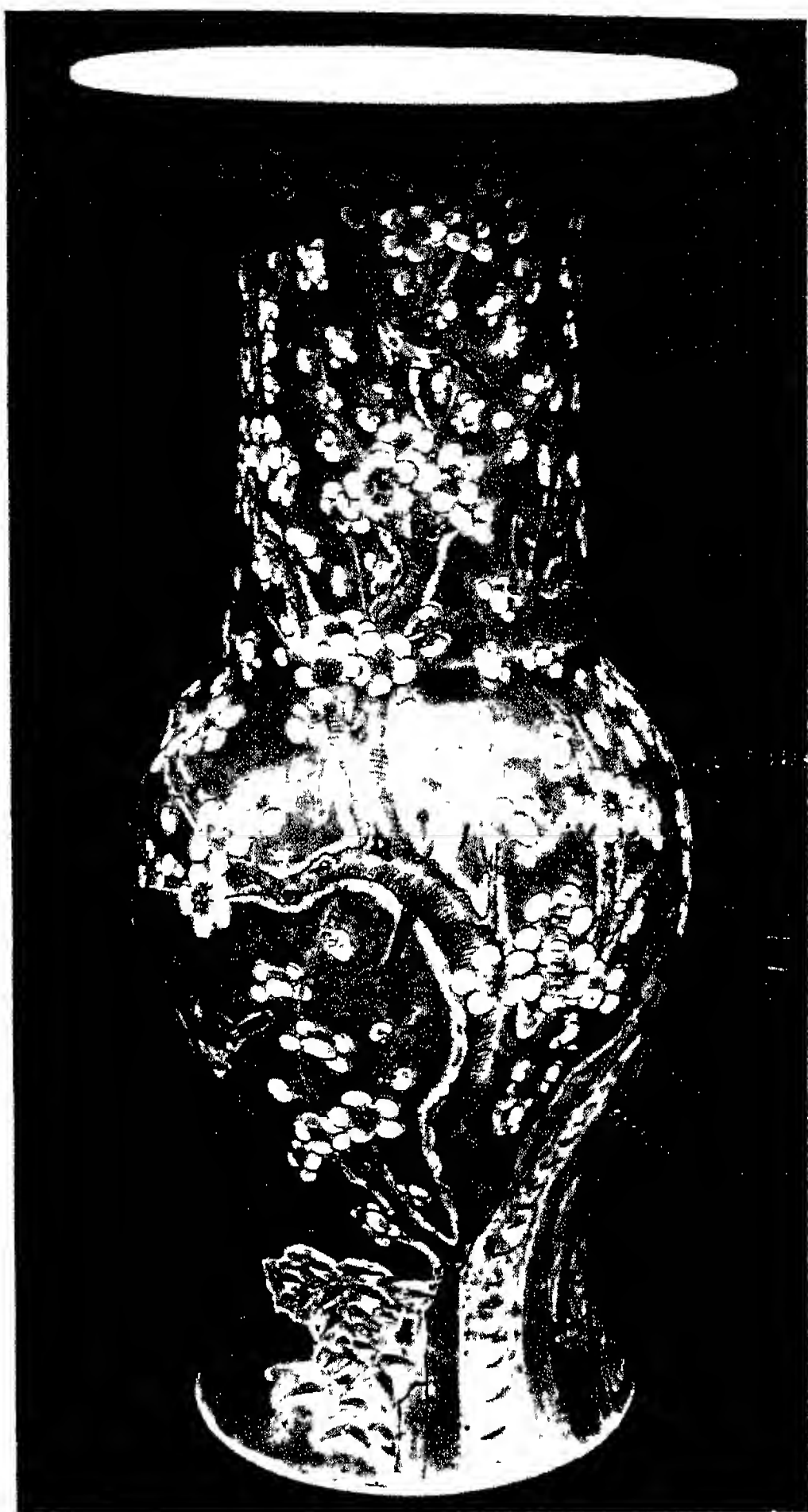


PLATE XXIX. Porcelain Beaker. Painted in enamel colour of the *famille verte* on a green ground. Period of K'ang Hsi (1662-1722). The Author's loan collection, Birmingham Museum.

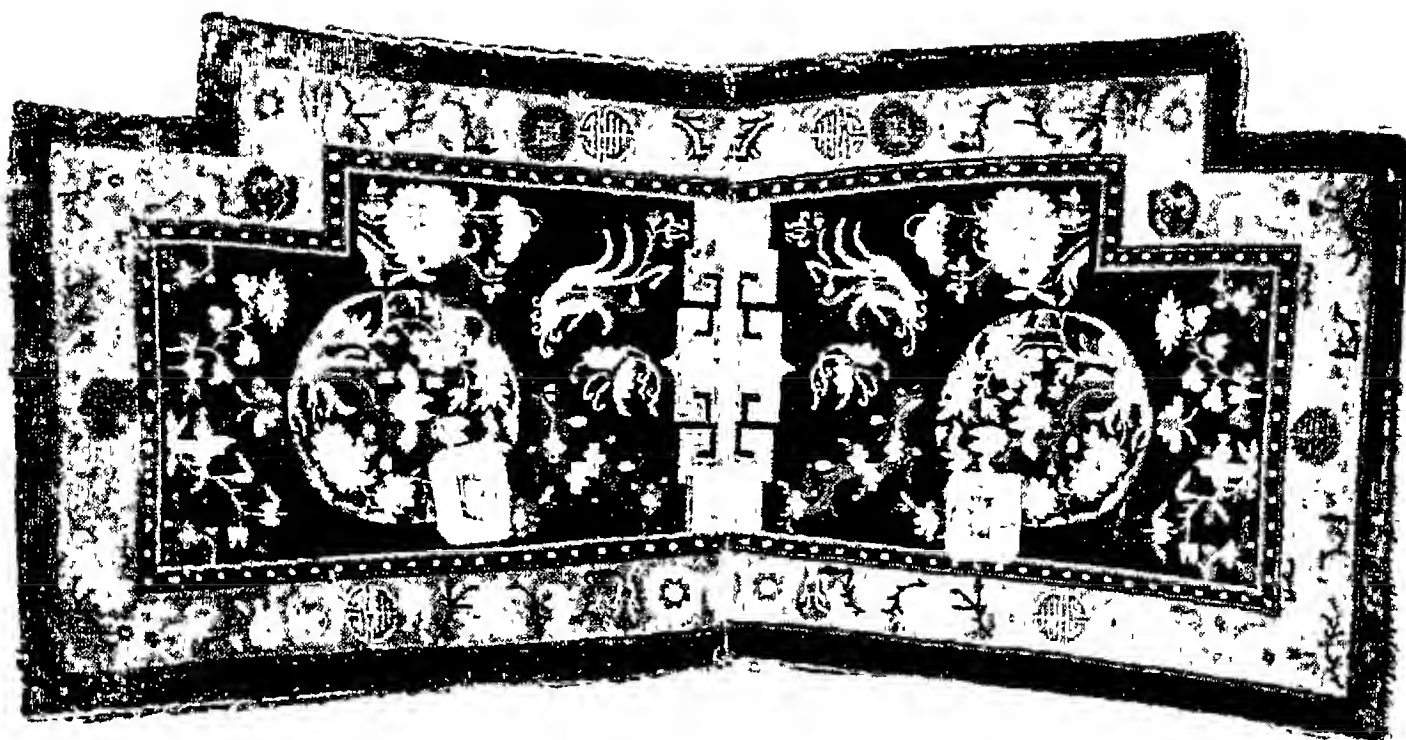


PLATE XXX. Woollen Pile Saddle Rug. With decoration of butterflies amongst blossoming prunus, magnolia, lotus, tree-peony, chrysanthemum, &c. 18th century. The Author's collection.

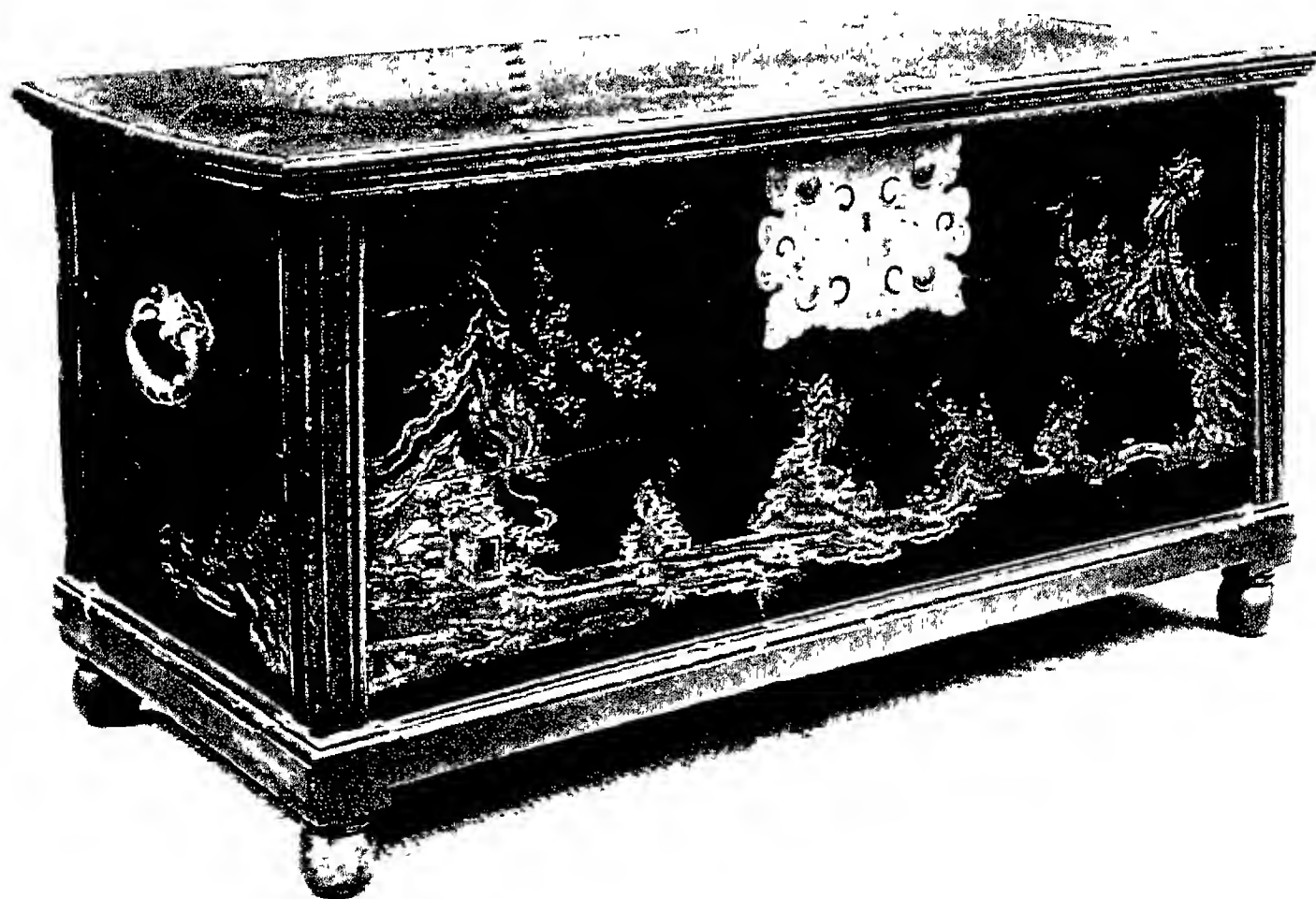


PLATE XXX. Chest of Wood. With decoration of raised and incised lacquer, partly gilt, on a black ground. 18th century. Height, 2 ft. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; length 5 ft. 3 inches; depth, 2 ft. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Victoria and Albert Museum.

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damage in the kiln it had to be placed in a fire-clay case or seggar. The seggars were carefully stacked in the kiln, which measured about ten feet in width and height and something more in length. The furnaces, fed with wood, were then lighted and kept burning for about three days. On the fourth day, when relatively cool, they were opened and the potter knew if his venture had been a success. Père d'Entrecolles tells us that so many firings were unsuccessful in his time that many potters were ruined and the trade was something of a gamble. Much might, however, be done to ensure success by the proper propitiation of the god of "Fire and Blast". The ware was now withdrawn from the kiln. If it had been painted with blue and successfully fired, it came out with a brilliant blue decoration complete and ready for the market. The glaze covering is necessary for the development of the blue colour: without glaze it would merely fire black.

'If, on the other hand, the ware was destined to be painted in enamel colours, such as the *famille verte* and *famille rose*, it now proceeded to the enamellers' sheds, and received its decoration in vitrifiable enamels applied by the brush to the glazed surface. To develop these enamels and to make them adhere to the surface another firing was necessary, but only at a comparatively low temperature and in a small kiln or stove called a "muffle". If gold was included in the decoration, yet another firing at a still lower temperature was needed. The final operations were grading the ware and packing it for transport. The inferior grades of porcelain were apparently reserved for local sale.'

Enamel colours painted over the glaze, which are referred to in the passage just quoted, and those

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painted direct on the biscuit, now reached the period of their greatest perfection. The most famous were *Porcelain* the *famille verte* and the *famille noire*. In the *types* former a soft yet vivid green and in the latter a deep lustrous black predominated, while these were supported by yellow, violet-blue, aubergine purple, and coral red. Fine specimens can be seen in most of the principal museums but they are now extremely rare, and the typical large flower vases of these two groups fetch fabulous prices. But they were never cheap—not even in the eighteenth century—for at that time China was exporting to the West the finer and more fragile products of her kilns, a new development made possible by improved conditions and methods of transport, and those in most demand were the blue and white and the *famille verte* enamelled porcelains. (See Colour-plate and Plate XXIX.)

Perhaps the supreme achievement of the time and the group which is still most popular is the *The Ginger Jar* ovoid 'ginger jar' with decoration of sprays of white blossoms on a deep blue ground. They go by many other names, hawthorn jars and prunus jars being the most usual and the most suitable. For these beautiful things are truly poems in porcelain. The lovely sapphire intersected by a network of black lines like the cracking of ice over the sparkling blue waters of earliest spring-time: the fallen sprigs of white plum-blossom—first of flowering trees—that float upon it, portray the revival of gaiety in a world released

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from winter's clutches. For the prunus jar was made to carry New Year's gifts, and in China New Year's Day falls later than with us. The Chinese, too, knew the value of their porcelain, for the custom was to return it to the sender of the gift. And, in spite of its name, the gift within the jar was not ginger but fragrant tea.

Mention of blue and white porcelain, tea, and ginger recalls that the Dutch, following the Portuguese, developed a flourishing China ^{*European*} trade, ^{*seventeenth century*} during this reign. Perhaps the most beautiful things then imported were the textiles. The Chinese were quick to seize their opportunity, and numbers of silk hangings and embroideries were made specially for the foreign market and largely for the Church. In course of time other seafaring nations increased the demand, and early in the eighteenth century the East India Company were shipping to England quantities of woven silks, silk-embroidered satins, painted silks, brocades, tapestries, and cut velvets. Of these the latter are the least attractive, for velvet-weaving was not a Chinese craft and was never appreciated there as it was in Europe. On the other hand the native craft of tapestry-weaving had been practised for over a thousand years, and this helps to account for its delicate loveliness and its long-continued popularity in the West. (See Colour-plate.) Of all its forms the magnificent robes enriched with gold thread are perhaps the best known.

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The English ships followed the Dutch, and both carried lacquer, enamels, jades, and carpets with more prosaic cargoes. (See Plate XXX.) Preference for blue and white porcelain was the direct cause of the great output of the well-known blue and white ware made in imitation of porcelain by the Dutch potters of Delft. And this preference, in turn, was the impulse which spurred the Chinese potters to make wares specially for the Dutch market, and later on these interactions contributed to the craze for *chinoiserie* to which Europe succumbed in the eighteenth century. This craze will be referred to again in the latter part of this chapter. The passion for blue and white (or Nanking, as it was afterwards called) seems to have blinded collectors of that day to the great charm of a large number of other groups.

Of these groups one of the finest is the monochrome porcelain. Always less popular in England than in France (where they were given *Monochromes* ormolu mounts) and, more recently, in America, they only receive the full appreciation they deserve in China itself. It would be natural to expect that this period, which reproduced the types of previous periods, would not neglect the soft, clear colourings of the Sung dynasty. But the eighteenth century was an age of experiment as well, and so we find the potters trying new methods and adding to the lovely though limited range of Sung glazes. The K'ang Hsi monochromes are consequently too numerous to list, but the

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most famous are the mazarine, a dark blue named after Cardinal Mazarin, sky blue, turquoise (varieties of which are likened by the Chinese to birds' feathers—the 'kingfisher blue' or 'peacock green'), 'powder blue,' the velvety effect of which was obtained by blowing the colour over the surface so that a powdering of minute dots alighted on it, a brilliant black shot with purple which collectors call 'ravens' wing', a soft coral red, an iridescent green called 'snake-skin green', and a similar type in yellow mottled with other colours called 'eel-skin yellow'. Lang T'ing-tso, a famous viceroy, is said to have given his name to two other rare and beautiful kinds of glazes, the apple-green *Lang Yao* and the ruby-red *Lang Yao*, better known by its French name *sang de bœuf*. The truth of this story is in doubt, but there is no doubt about the loveliness of these two colours. The *sang de bœuf* was a revival of the 'sacrificial red' mentioned in the last chapter, but now it attained to an even greater lustre and brilliance. Both colours were derived from copper, and later in the reign of K'ang Hsi another famous red evolved from the same process—the priceless peach-bloom glaze so much sought after by collectors. Also late in this reign the *famille rose* first appeared. As the name implies, rose red varying from rich crimson to a delicate pink predominates in this scheme of decoration. The colour was enthusiastically welcomed by craftsmen and patron alike, for it was one of the most striking of the new inventions and was

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derived from gold, but it is more typical of the following Yung Chêng and Ch'ien Lung reigns, and in its debased, over-elaborated form is still in demand to-day.

Unfortunately it is the later, more vulgar productions which are familiar to us in the West; and for a very good reason. The great demand for 'china' gradually resulted in the export of inferior wares: in Canton, rapidly turned out, gaudy copies of the fine traditional forms have been made specially for the foreign market for the past two hundred years. But during the last great periods (throughout the eighteenth century), even the imperial porcelains are not beyond criticism. Standards of taste will of course always vary, but most connoisseurs agree that in spite of the purity of colouring, the faultless design and drawing of the decoration and technical perfection in the potting, there is something lacking. This something eludes definition but is perhaps best represented by the word spontaneity. From K'ang Hsi to his son Yung Chêng and his grandson Ch'ien Lung this fugitive quality becomes weaker and weaker, while its substitutes, cleverness and sophistication, hold the field for a time against utter degeneration.

Nevertheless porcelain was the art *par excellence* of the epoch, for signs of approaching decadence were visible in the (now) lesser arts. Sculpture of the heroic type was already dead, and the sculptor's place had been usurped by the carver in wood and ivory,

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the lapidary, and the goldsmith. Delightful trinkets and painstaking models in miniature occupied the unhurried attention of workers in jade and agate, rock crystal, and coloured glass. Snuff-bottles, writing sets, vases not intended for flowers, and incense-burners unsullied by incense smoke became the fashion. *Cloisonné* and other forms of enamelled metal, although never considered worthy to rank with other arts, were still being made. Individual pieces were often larger in size than formerly and the technical ability of the craftsman was of a high order, yet the result shows a tendency to over-elaboration and prettiness. Painting enamels on copper became a flourishing industry, and Canton enamel was soon more *Enamel* sought after in the West than it was in China. The attitude of the Chinese scholar and connoisseur to enamelled copper is well put by one of them who, towards the end of the eighteenth century, wrote:¹

‘One often sees incense-urns and flower vases, wine-cups and saucers, bowls, and dishes, ewers for wine, and round boxes for cakes and fruit, painted in very brilliant colours; but, although vulgarly called porcelain, these things have nothing of the pure translucency of true porcelain. They are only fit for use as ornaments of ladies’ apartments—not at all for the chaste furniture of the library of a simple scholar.’

Limoges enamels were brought to China by Jesuit missionaries and copied there, and the craft developed

¹*Chinese Art*, S. W. Bushell, *Victoria and Albert Museum Handbook*, vol. ii, p. 85.

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on exactly the same lines as the Limoges enamels in France and the Battersea enamels in England. In China the craft deteriorated just as other crafts had, and no work of artistic importance has been done since the close of the eighteenth century.

The same is true of painting. Imitation of earlier styles, preoccupation with technical niceties, *Painting* and pedantry in general mark the prolific output of this time. It was an age of great erudition and found expression more readily in writing about great paintings than in producing them. The most celebrated work of this kind is the *Imperial Encyclopaedia of Calligraphy and Painting*—a colossal task decreed by K'ang Hsi in 1705 and undertaken by eleven artists and scholars, who, in three years, produced a work of one hundred books and sixty-four volumes dealing with the history and every aspect of pictorial art. The Emperor himself wrote the preface with his vermilion pencil.¹

But though the painters were now moved by an academic interest in technique and by pedantic archaism this interest has preserved for us many fascinating details about the earlier artists, their methods and their ideals. Although no longer painted with the same spontaneity, landscape was still regarded as the highest form of expression, because the created universe embraced all living things and was to them as much alive as the human beings which are a part of

¹S. W. Bushell, *op. cit.*



PLATE XXXI. Blossoming Prunus Tree. Model in jade and other semi-precious stones standing in a pot of Canton enamel. 18th century. The Baroness D'Erlanger's collection.

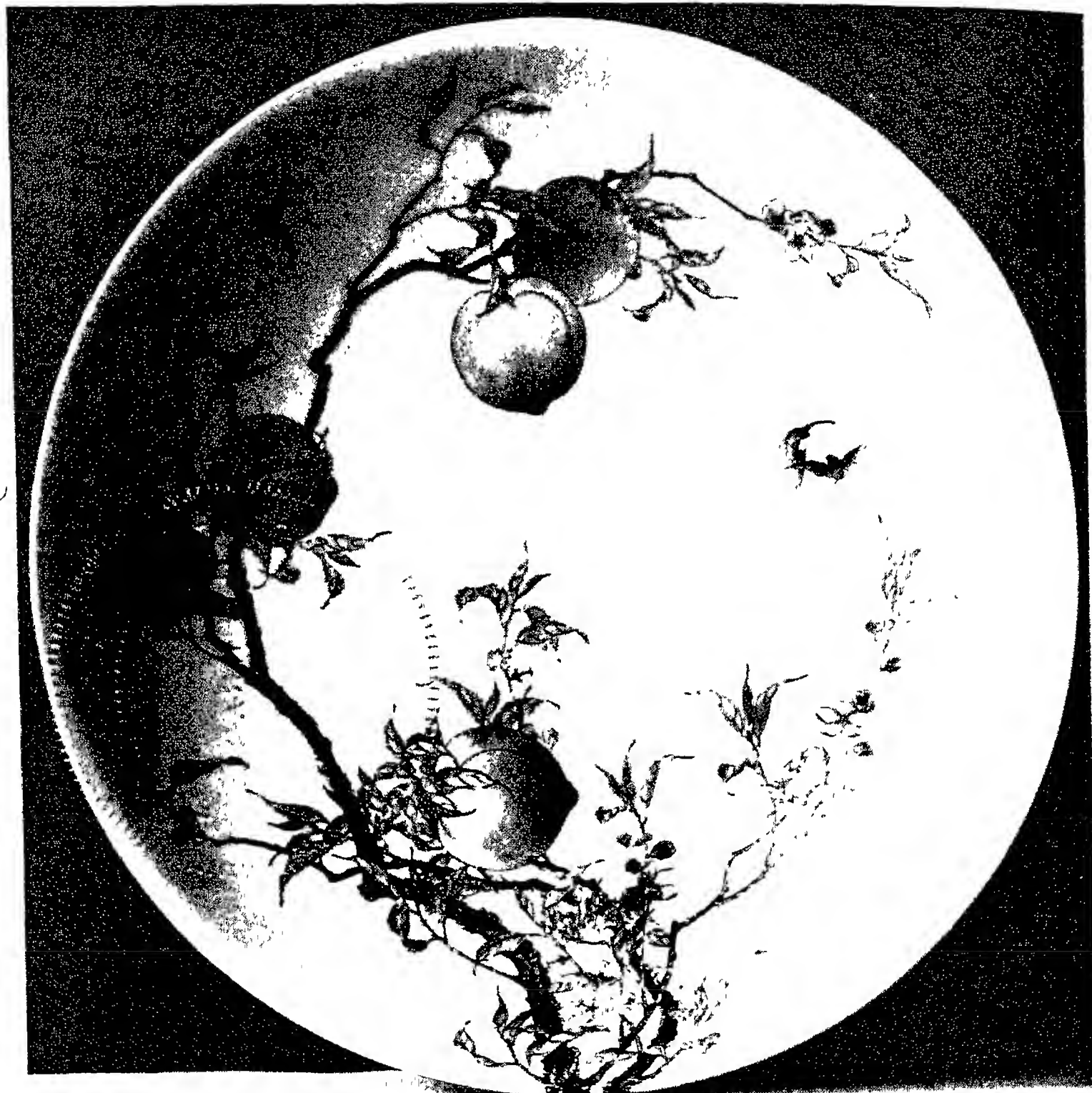


PLATE XXXII. Porcelain Dish. Painted in enamel colour of the *famille rose*.
Mark and period of Yung Chêng (1723-35). Victoria and Albert Museum.

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it. The moods of nature were as real to the artist as his own moods. The streams, trees, and flowers were drawn with a sensitiveness which brings vividly before us the artist's own conviction that these were sentient things. Ever since the Six Canons of Painting had been laid down Chinese artists had affirmed that the first canon—spiritual harmony and rhythm manifesting life in movement—was the highest achievement. Of two of the great critics who discussed this canon, one, writing in the eleventh century, said that if the artist's ability to impart this quality to his work was not innate it could not be learnt; another, writing in the seventeenth century, said: 'By reading ten thousand books and travelling ten thousand miles one can cultivate something approaching spiritual rhythm.' The painters of the eighteenth and following centuries followed the advice of the later critic, but their study and travel have only persuaded us that the earlier writer was nearest to the truth. The traditional subjects were painted with academic correctness but with spiritual lifelessness. Hackneyed renderings were the rule, even of delightful themes like 'The Three Friends in Winter', as the bamboo, the pine, and the prunus were called. In this subject the first two earned their name for their evergreen leaves, the prunus—as the earliest flowering tree—was loved for its late winter blossoms which open while its branches are still bare of leaves. Moreover the ideas of loyalty, strength, and sweetness are also implicit

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in the pliant bamboo, the sturdy pine, and the blossoming prunus. But while the painters made less of these charming traditions than formerly, neither they nor the court could make anything of the portraits in the European style which were executed by the two Jesuit missionaries Pères Attiret and Castiglione. These Fathers had been appointed court-painters by the emperor, and their work, of course, showed foreign characteristics such as high lights and cast shadows, mathematical perspective, and the conventional well-filled background which offend against Chinese standards. Eventually they were forced to make brush drawings in the Chinese style, some of which are still preserved, though more as curiosities than works of art.

This episode occurred during the period which followed the reign of the great K'ang Hsi. *Yung Ch'eng and Ch'ien Lung,* 1722-96 He was succeeded by his son Yung Ch'eng, who lived till 1736, when his heir Ch'ien Lung came to the throne. The two reigns together comprise a period of great activity and similarity in their art productions, of which the chief was still porcelain.

The enamelled porcelain changed in character. The *famille verte* gave way to the new favourite, *Porcelain* the *famille rose*. Various shades of crimson and rose-pink fill the backgrounds and bejewel the decoration, giving a novel form of gaiety and delicacy unknown to the K'ang Hsi palette in which green, black,

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and yellow had predominated. While it was an age of imitation and clever copying of traditional types, it continued to be an age also of experiment, which often resulted in colour schemes in the ornament as fantastic as the new shapes evolved in the body of the ware. The contrast between the attitude of the Chinese and the Persian potters to their craft has been well put by Mr. Bernard Rackham, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, as follows: 'The Persians had a sure sense of ceramic form; in this they out-rivalled even the Chinese, whose curiosity to explore every kind of technical process more often betrayed them into the perpetration of non-ceramic forms and decoration.'¹ Although Mr. Rackham refers to an earlier time these words are also applicable to later wares, for the characteristic Chinese attitude tended to become more and more emphasized as the eighteenth century drew to a close.

Ching-tê Chên had seen many able directors, one of the most famous being T'ang Ying, whose term of office lasted from 1728 to 1749. To his encouragement the workers in the imperial porcelain factory of this time owed much, and we owe much to his many writings on ceramics which provide a large part of our knowledge concerning conditions, materials, and methods. Among the types most frequently found are the paper-thin egg-shell porcelains, translucent hexagonal lanterns with pierced panels and decoration in

¹*Persian Art, Pottery and Glass*, Bernard Rackham (Luzac), p. 75.

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famille rose enamels, delicate vessels including dinner services specially made to the order of foreigners, with foreign coats of arms or with quaint Chinese versions of Western themes and Biblical subjects. Some of the most beautiful were the white saucer-dishes on the inside surface of which sprays of leaves and flowers were painted in delicate line and charming colour. Sometimes the backs were solidly filled in with the rich crimson of the *famille rose* palette, and this group is called 'ruby-backed' and is much sought after by collectors. The floral decoration of these painted porcelain saucers is in a style of elegant naturalism and the whole effect is exquisitely dainty and sophisticated. They belong to the earlier part of the period but the tradition persisted throughout the century, and even to-day cruder but quite pleasing copies are being made. (See Plate XXXII.)

There is little to be said about the other arts.

Architecture The seeds of decadence had been sown and they germinated everywhere. Yung Chêng's reign saw the retreat from Asia and retirement from the trade routes of the high seas. It also saw the phenomenal growth of the Secret Societies and of disaffection. The accession of Ch'ien Lung to the throne arrested this decline, for he was a great conqueror and administrator, a painter-poet, an exponent of calligraphy and patron of literature and architecture. But though his conquests in West China and the Asian border enabled his country to regain



Gathering and Winnowing the Harvest
Silk tapestry (K'o ssü). Ascribed to the 18th Century, A.D.
Reproduced by the courtesy of The Chinese Government,
which reserves all rights



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much of her lost prestige, he was powerless alike to dam the ebbing tide of culture and to stamp out the Secret Societies. Some of Peking's most imposing buildings were erected by him, but again in the traditional style, usually indeed slavishly copying older buildings. The finest of these was the Pi Yung Kung, Imperial Hall of the Classics: the most spectacular was the Temple of Heaven. The latter was struck by lightning and burnt to the ground because an impious centipede dared to climb on to the golden ball at the top—so it is said—and it was rebuilt in the same style, roofed with the same wonderful cobalt blue tiles, late in the nineteenth century. But this and the three white marble, circular terraces of the Altar of Heaven have too often been described to merit further attention here.

Ingenuity, prettiness, sophistication, and preciousness mark the decline in the last half of the eighteenth century, and this decline was accelerated rather than delayed by the interest in Chinese art which Europe displayed as a result of growing trade and increasing knowledge. For foreigners were fascinated by the strangeness of colour and design and the elaboration and intricacy of these dainty new toys. They did not trouble themselves to discover whether finer things had been made in the past. Everything Chinese was quaint and delightful, and almost everything they saw was the product of an age of decline.

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extinguished in the chaotic changes accompanying the industrial revolution. But the nineteenth century brought disaster on the heels of decline. The Western peoples had lost interest in art, they worshipped not beauty but money and power. Their vanguard of traders heralded an invasion of less merciful philistines in succession to that of the Manchus. Both the art which these philistines introduced into China and that which appealed to them there was, in the main, bad art. The two cultures interacted to each other's disadvantage. In addition to such tragedies as the so-called Opium War other catastrophes occurred.

The T'ai ping rebellion was organized by a Chinese professing Christianity, who declared war to the death on the Buddhists. The persecution reached such proportions that the government found itself impotent in the face of a country-wide army of rebels who massacred and burnt in the name of Christ. Many thousands of beautiful temples were destroyed, their libraries burnt, their paintings and sculpture defaced or thrown into the nearest river. An eyewitness has said that for many days together the Yangtse was choked with the floating wreckage of temple buildings, dismembered figures and other debris—precious relics of China's past greatness. Ultimately the Chinese government called in the help of the foreigner to quell the most menacing rebellion and persecution China had known for three hundred years. The insurrection was at

*The T'ai ping
Rebellion,
mid-nineteenth
century*

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last put down, chiefly owing to the genius of 'Chinese' Gordon.

The last and lesser catastrophe was the Boxer Rising. During this revolt, and the subsequent reprisals, the great Han-lin Academy *The Boxer Rising* was burnt and thousands of priceless literary records went up in flames. Many temples and palaces in Peking were damaged and looted, and the famous Summer Palace outside Peking (as in the T'aiping rebellion) suffered worse treatment than the others.

Since that time the lack of a strong central government and the consequent neglect of ancient monuments, which followed upon the collapse *The twentieth century* of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1912, then civil war with its burning and looting, have decimated what beauty was still left. Latterly the 'frightfulness' incidental to wars of invasion, and the wanton destruction by bands of brigands and other riff-raff calling themselves 'Communists', have piled still higher the mounds of ruin. Unscrupulous dealers' agents, taking advantage of the widespread apathy of the people in face of these grievous calamities, reap a ghoulis harvest of damaged and neglected works of art and find a ready sale for them in the foreign market. And where they chance to discover cave-shrine sculptures or temple figures still intact but too large to carry away, they decapitate them and sell the heads to antique dealers abroad. Small wonder, then, that numberless Chinese whose hearts bleed at the fate

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of their great country, seeing as yet no single ray of hope, express in other words the sad thought quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

When will return the glory of your prime?

No more—O never more!

But there is hope. Recently formed archaeological societies in China, backed up by government support, will do much to help. Further, the changed spirit of Western countries, resulting in their growing interest in her art and sympathy with her plight, will surely find expression in practical measures to aid this, the greatest civilization of the Far East.



FIG. 15. ONE OF A PAIR OF DRAGON MASKS FOR
RING HANDLES

(The latter missing.) From the entrance doors of the famous temple, Er Wang Miao, Kuan-hsien, in Ssü-ch'uan. Typical of 18th-century work. In hardwood, carved, with traces of painting and gilt. (This temple has since been burnt down.)

Height and width 11 inches.

From a drawing made on the spot by the Author.

APPENDIX I

PRONUNCIATION OF CHINESE NAMES

Vowel Equivalents

<i>a</i>	as in	father	<i>ia</i>	as in	yarn
<i>ai</i>	„	aisle	<i>ie</i>	„	siesta
<i>ao</i>	„	loud	<i>ieh</i>	„	yea
<i>e</i>	„	bet	<i>iu</i>	„	adieu
<i>ê</i>	„	err	<i>j</i>	„	the French <i>j</i> (<i>joie</i>), & c.
<i>eh</i>	„	say	<i>o</i>	„	or
<i>ei</i>	„	feint	<i>ou</i>	„	owe
<i>en</i>	„	men	<i>u</i>	„	flute
<i>ên</i>	„	fun	<i>ü</i>	„	the French <i>u</i> (<i>une</i>), & c.
<i>êrh</i>	„	err	<i>uai</i>	„	wight
<i>i</i>	„	machine	<i>uei</i>	„	weight

Aspirates

<i>ch</i>	„	jerk	<i>p</i>	„	back
<i>ch'</i>	„	chirp	<i>p'</i>	„	pack
<i>k</i>	„	go	<i>t</i>	„	dab
<i>k'</i>	„	king	<i>t'</i>	„	tab

Other Sounds

<i>hs</i>	„	hush	<i>ssü</i>	„	ace
<i>chih</i>	„	chirp	<i>tzü</i>	„	adze
<i>shih</i>	„	chivalry			

APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

CHINA

<i>Date B.C.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
<p>Legendary and Pre- historic Age.</p> <p>About 3000</p>			<p>New Stone Age. Earliest picture-writing symbols, and carved bones. Yang Shao culture settlements. Bone, stone, and jade implements and weapons: some prototypes of later forms. Unglazed pottery: hollow-legged tripod and other cooking vessels. From Kansu settlements—fine painted grave-pottery, urns, &c.</p>
<p>About 3000–2500 ? 2852</p>	Fu Hsi	Alleged discoverer of the Eight Trigrams and of writing.	
	Shên Nung	'The Divine Husband-man.'	
? 2600	Huang Ti	The Legendary Yellow Emperor and his empress. Alleged discoverers of bronze-casting and silk culture	? Beginnings of bronze-casting.
About 2250	Yao and Shun	The ideal rulers. Alleged discoverers of the Calendar, the method of organized government and of music.	
? 2206	Hsia The Great Yü, founder	Controller of the waters. Founder of the Nine Bronze Cauldrons (Tripods). Division of the land into nine provinces.	Finds of carved jade, bronze, &c., not definitely authenticated.

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
End of New Stone Age and beginning of use of wrought metals. Painted pottery of Susa. Painted pottery from Anau, Russian Turkistan, resembling the painted pottery from Kansu, China. Hieroglyphic inscriptions.	Sumerian culture; beginnings of writing, stone statues, stele, &c. Elamite culture. Rise of first true Egyptians. The Ancient Empire in Egypt.
The Pyramids of Gizeh. The Sphinx.	Oldest Aegean culture. The Egyptian Pharaohs, Cheops, Chephren, Mycerinus. Indus Valley culture.
	Sargon I of Agade, Babylonia.
Stage-towers in Babylonia.	
Temple of Ammon at Karnak.	The Middle Empire in Egypt.
	The code of laws of Hammurabi engraved on stone. About 2000 B.C.
Palace of Knossos, Crete. Cyclopean masonry in Crete.	
Acropolis of Tiryns.	Hyksos (Shepherd) dynasty in Egypt. Aegean culture.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date B.C.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
? 1766	SHANG-YIN		Quantities of inscribed tortoise-shell archives, and oracular inscriptions. Bone, horn, and ivory carvings. Expert bronze-casting and jade carving. Coloured pottery, (? accidentally) glazed pottery. The Dragon, Elephant, 'Ogre's Mask', Cicada, 'Cloud and thunder' pattern, &c., appear as <i>motifs</i> in 'animal style'. Carved antler now in the British Museum.
		Development of the patriarchal system.	
		Great power of priest-diviners.	Great beauty of bronze sacrificial vessels.
About 1122	CHOU	Rise of the feudal system. Classic age of national culture develops.	Influence of so-called Scythian animal style. The Silver Island cauldron. ? 10th cent.
? 8th cent. 776 c. 722	PERIOD OF SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS	First dated eclipse of the sun.	The Ten Stone Drums. Mural paintings referred to in literature. Pottery imitates bronze forms.
? 604-529		Lao-tzŭ.	
? 551-472 c. 481	PERIOD OF WARRING STATES	Confucius.	Bronze sacrificial vessels frequently show head of sacrificial victim in their decoration.

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
	The New Empire in Egypt.
Mycenaean pottery.	Phoenician alphabet.
Temple of Luxor, Egypt.	
The Gate of Lions and the Treasury of Atreus, Mycenae.	
The hypostyle hall at Karnak.	
The Ramesseum and Temple of Medinet Habu.	The Pharaohs Rameses II and Rameses III.
	The Trojan War.
	The Hellenic Age. Homer.
	Increasing power of Assyria.
Temple of Solomon: metal-work by Hiram of Tyre.	Tiglath Pileser III. Sargon II. Jews in captivity.
Contact of Iranians with Assyria and Babylonia giving rise to early Persian art.	Founding of Rome.
'The Lion Hunt.'—famous Assyrian bas-relief. About 650 B.C. B.M.	Sennacherib destroys Babylon.
Period of the black on red Greek vases.	The Saite Empire in Egypt.
Temple of Diana at Ephesus.	Greeks invent eight-stringed lyre.
'Frieze of Archers', from Susa. Louvre	
The Etruscan Cloaca Maxima at Rome.	Nebuchadnezzar, rebuilder of Babylon.
The Etruscan fineterra-cottasculpture.	Cyrus the Great, the Persian.
Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis.	Achaemenids.
	The Buddha.
	Sappho.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date B.C.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
372-289		Mencius. Rise of the House of Ch'in.	The latter becomes stereotyped. Immolation gives way to burial of models of human beings, animals, &c. Lacquer in colours used for small objects and as mural decoration. Influence of the Indo-Scyths and Sarmatians. Introduction of gold, and possibly of glass.
221	CH'IN Shih Huang Ti	Mêng T'ien in charge of work on Great Wall, the writing-brush. Li Ssü alleged inventor of Small Seal characters. Destruction of feudal system: age of imperialism. Alleged record of first Buddhist missionary.	The Great Wall. The 'Burning of the Books' and destruction of ancient bronzes. Escape from tradition in art. Evolution of a lighter 'animal style'. Age of monumental architecture and sculpture and mural paintings (no survivals). Bronze mirrors.
206	WESTERN HAN Liu Pang, founder	Revival of learning. Development of the silk trade with the West.	Revival in the arts. Greater freedom and delicacy of ornament. Bronze vessels in shape of sacrificial victims.
157	Wu-ti	Extension of the empire. Contact with Roman Empire and introduction of glass. Evolu-	Bronze and iron inlaid with gold and silver. First relics of silk weav-

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Period of red on black Greek vases. Building of the Parthenon. Ictinus, architect. Phidias, sculptor. The Erechtheion. 'Treasure of the Oxus.' 5th cent. B.C. Influence of the Greek painters, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, and Agatharcus (discoverer of perspective). The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.	The battle of Marathon. Herodotus. Socrates. Plato. Alexander the Great.
Chief period of the Tanagra figures.	The Seleucids. The Ptolemaic Empire in Egypt.
Influence of the Greek sculptor Praxiteles.	Rome conquers Etruria. Euclid. Pyrrhus of Epirus supports Grecian revolt in Roman Italy and is defeated.
The Colossus of Rhodes. The Sānchī Stūpa, India.	Asoka, King of India, makes Buddhism state religion. Sends mission to Kashmir and Khotan, and thence, possibly, to China.
Greco-Buddhist sculpture and the temple of Bodh-Gayā, India.	Hannibal. 2nd Punic (i.e. Phoenician) War. Romans defeated by Hannibal at Battles of Lake Thrasymerne and Cannae. Scipio Africanus conquers Hannibal. Romans conquer Philip V, King of Macedon. Judas Maccabeus.
The Venus of Milo.	
The Laocoön.	3rd Punic War: Rome defeats Carthage.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date B.C.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
		tion of brush-writing develops into calligraphy as a fine art. Growth of lexicography and poetry. Power of Taoist magicians.	ings. Relics of large and massive tombs and monumental sculpture. First glazed pottery imitates bronze. Mythological subjects in mural paintings and bas-reliefs.
122		Chang Ch'ien's journey across Asia.	Ho Chü-p'ing's tomb sculpture.
		Ssü-ma Ch'ien, great historian.	Free use of brick and tile in buildings.
2		Probable date of introduction of Buddhism.	
A.D. 9	Wang Mang	The interregnum.	
25	EASTERN HAN		Development of relief sculpture.
58	Ming Ti	Edict of Ming Ti: official introduction of Buddhism. A.D. 65-7. The invention of paper.	Development of portrait painting, and of calligraphy. Monumental animal and figure sculpture.
166		Mission from Marcus Aurelius to China.	First appearance of glazed porcellaneous stone-ware with many of the characteristics of porcelain.
180		First Chinese Buddhist monk ordained.	Great advance in composition and perspective in painting.
190		First recorded Buddhist temple erected. Loss of the foreign empire.	The Han tomb brick paintings. The Shantung bas-reliefs. Buildings roofed with straight slopes.
220	WEI. SHU HAN. WU.	The Three Kingdoms. Dismemberment of China.	Pottery, bronze, &c., crudely imitate Han models.

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
	Rome: decline of Republic. Macedonia and Greece become Roman Provinces. Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus killed.
Vitruvius, Roman architect.	Julius Caesar. Pompey. Antony and Cleopatra. Augustus and the Roman Empire.
Rise of Alexandrian art.	Jesus Christ. Seneca. Nero. Pliny the Elder. Boadicea.
Art of Pompeii and Herculaneum.	Destruction of Jerusalem.
Trajan's column, Rome. Hadrian's Wall, Britain. The Pantheon Column of Marcus Aurelius. Greco-Buddhist sculpture, Gandhara. The great frescoes of the caves at Ajanta, India. (1st to 7th century.) Early Christian art of the Catacombs, Rome. Arch of Septimius Severus, Rome.	Kaniska, King of the Indo-Scyths. Hadrian. Marcus Aurelius. Decline of Roman Empire: attacks by Goths, Vandals, and Franks.
	Tertullian.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date A.D.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
247	Liu Pei of the Shu Han.	Chu-Ko Liang. Kuan Yü. Ts'ao Ts'ao. Arrival of Sêng-hui in China.	The bronze drums. Buddhist painters in the south.
265	WEST. CHIN	Attempted reunion of the State.	The first pagoda—said to have been built at Nanking.
317 351	EAST. CHIN FORMER CH'IN LATER YEN	First reference to tea. Period of dismember- ment and Division of North and South	
386 to 535	NORTH. WEI	Supremacy of the Tar- tar Wei dynasties.	Ku K'ai-chih, painter, of South China. Great period of Buddhist sculpture in North China.
397	NORTH. LIANG	Chaotic age of confused records.	First cave-shrines. Tun- Huang and Yün-Kang. Lung-mên.
401 420	WEST. LIANG LIU SUNG	? Invention of ink. First persecution of Buddhism, A.D. 444.	
479	SOUTH. CH'I	Rapid growth of Bud- dhism.	First record of curved roofs.
502	LIANG	Bodhidharma arrived A.D. 520.	Sung Shan pagoda, A.D. 523.
534 535 550 557	EAST. WEI WEST. WEI NORTH. CH'I NORTH. CHOU	First reference to the compass. Second persecution of Buddhism, A.D. 573.	Yellow porcellaneous glazes and resonant stone-wares.
581	SUI	Empire again united. Imperial Canal begun.	Hsieh Ho—the Six Canons of Painting.
618	T'ANG T'ai Tsung	Envoy and pilgrim Hsüang Tsang and I Tsing: 1st record of true porcelain. 7th century.	Renaissance of art in- spired by Buddhism. Full flowering of the revival in art. Characteristics: simpli- city, vigour, nobility.

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Palace of Diocletian, Spalato.	Valerian. Rise of Sāsānian Persian Empire.
The Iron Column of Delhi, India.	Constantine and the Byzantine Empire. Julian the Apostate. Theodosius the Great. Christianity made official religion of Roman Empire. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, father of church music. Romans evacuate Britain.
Fall of Rome and beginning of the Dark Ages in European art. (A.D. 410.)	Alaric, King of the Visigoths. St. Augustine: ("The City of God"). Attila, King of the Huns. Hengist and Horsa in Britain. ? King Arthur and his Knights. Theodoric.
Sancta Sophia, Constantinople. A.D. 537. Byzantine art—zenith.	St. Columba of Iona. Justinian and Theodora. Belisarius.
Development of Byzantine mosaics, miniatures and jewellery.	Jutes, Angles and Saxons invade Britain.
Palace of Ctesiphon.	Pope Gregory the Great, father of 'Gregorian' music.
Indonesian Art, Siam.	Ethelbert, King of Kent. St. Augustine.
Stagnation in European art.	Mohammed 'The Prophet'. Rise of Venice: trade with Constanti- nople. Arabs subdue Egypt, Persia, Sicily.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date A.D.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
682	Empress Wu	Expansion of empire: contact by land and sea with Western civilizations.	Painters Yen Li-pên, Li Ssü-hsün: founding of Northern and Southern schools.
713	Ming Huang	Augustan Age of literature. The poets Po Chü-i, Li Po, Tu Fu. Han-lin Academy founded.	The painter Wu Tao-tzū: subjects, Buddhist, Kuan-yin, &c., landscape.
781		Toleration of Jews, Manichaeans, Nestorian Christians, &c. The Nestorian Tablet at Sianfu.	Wang Wei: Southern school of painting: ? Han Kan. Influence of T'ang art on Japan. End of Indian (Gupta) influence on Chinese sculpture. Noble style in stone and pottery.
844	Wu-tsung	Great persecution of Buddhism.	'Lost porcelain of the T'ang' (found in Mesopotamia).
		Beginning of book-printing.	Brown, green, yellow and blue glazes on pottery.
		Invention of gunpowder.	The Lohan, ceramic statue, British Museum.
		Territory ceded to Kitan Tartars, who give the name Kitai (Cathay) to China.	Interaction of Persia and China in ceramics and textiles.
907	THE FIVE DYNASTIES	Period of fifty years' chaos.	Decline, after the great persecution of A.D. 844. Degeneration, especially in sculpture.
960	SUNG	Northern Sung 960-1127. Southern Sung 1127-1279. (Tartar dynasties in the north, Liao, Western Liao, Chin.)	Revival. Era of the connoisseur and collector, of archaeology and the printing of catalogues and encyclopaedias.
		Age of self-communion. Triumph of Ch'an (Zen), Contemplative School of Buddhism.	Direct Indian influence on art ceases. Great delicacy and beauty of painting, especially in landscape, flower, and bird paintings.

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Rise of Mohammedan art.	Arabs conquer the Moors.
Spread of Islam, Hispano-Moresque art impulse.	Arabs and Moors conquer Spain. The Venerable Bede.
Great Mosque of Damascus.	
Dark Ages of European art and culture	Haroun al-Raschid of <i>The Arabian Nights</i> .
Great Mosque of Cordova.	Charlemagne. Founding of Holy Roman Empire of the West. Byzantines defeated.
	First Danes in England. Egbert, King of Wessex.
Carolingian Art.	Foundation of the Russian Empire.
Rise of Khmer art, Cambodia.	Charles the Bald, King of France.
	Alfred the Great.
	Defeat of the Danes.
Zenith of Hispano-Moresque art.	The Inca Empire.
Dissemination, through Arab influence, of the art and learning of the Orient.	Ethelred the Unready. Arabs invade India.
Early stained glass in France.	
Byzantine cathedral of Périgueux.	
First monasteries of Mount Athos.	Firdousi, Persian poet.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date A.D.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
1004	Ching-tê	Gave his name to the great pottery town, Ching-tê Chên.	Purity of line and colour in pottery and porcelain. Apogee of Chün, Ting, and Celadon.
1068		The reformer Wang An-Shih.	Decline of sculpture: use of poor materials.
1101	Hui Tsung	Captured by Tartars in 1125.	Bird painter. Founder of Academy of Painting. Li Lung-mien, painter. Painting as interpretation of experience.
1130		Chu Hsi, philosopher.	Kuo Hsi. Essay on, and painter of landscape.
1200		Ssü-ma Kuang, historian.	Hsia Kuei, painter of 'A Myriad Miles of the Yangtse'—Ma Yüan, Mi Fei and Mu Ch'i, painters.
1215		Occupation of Peking by Mongols.	Hang Chou, the Southern Capital with its canals and four hundred marble bridges.
1280	YÜAN Kublai Khan	Mongol conquest and dynasty. Period of great expansion. Age of drama and the novel.	Continuation of Chinese tradition. Interaction with Persia and Tibet. Chao Mêng-fu, painter of horses. Chinese textiles influence Western.
1275		Marco Polo the Venetian at Peking.	
1368	MING Hung Wu	National monarchy. Contraction of the empire.	Art revival: bold forms, brilliant colour. Painters, Lü Ch'i, Ch'in Ying, T'ang Yin, Wên Chêng-ming: (in monochrome) Lin Liang, Wang Li-pên, Wu Wei.
1403	Yung Lo	Capital transferred, Nanking to Peking, A.D. 1421.	
1426	Hsüan Tê	Wang Yang-ming.	'Sacrificial' and 'Precious stone' red glazes, <i>blanc de Chine</i> porcelain.
1465 1488 1506	Ch'eng Hua Hung Chih Chêng Tê	First Portuguese ships at Canton, A.D. 1517.	

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
Beginning of a revival in European art. Romanesque. Saint Mark's, Venice. The Abbey of Cluny.	Danish conquest of England. Canute. Harold of Wessex. Battle of Hastings. William the Conqueror. Hereward the Wake.
Westminster Hall. London Bridge.	William Rufus.
Toulouse School of Romanesque sculpture.	
Temple of Angkor Vat, Cambodia. French Gothic architecture appears. Romanesque (Norman) period continues in England. Work begun on Notre Dame. Leaning Tower of Pisa. The Giralda and Alcazar, Seville.	Saladin. Henry II, King of England and most of France. Tristan and Ysolde. St. Thomas Becket. Frederick Barbarossa.
Chartres Cathedral. Early Limoges enamellers. Canterbury Cathedral built in transitional style.	Richard Cœur de Lion. Genghis Khan. Robin Hood. St. Francis of Assisi. Magna Carta.
Early English period of Gothic architecture. Salisbury Cathedral. Mont Saint Michel begun. The Alhambra, Granada. Nicola Pisano, sculptor. Kamakura Buddha, Japan. Henry III: Westminster Abbey. The Belfry of Bruges. Cimabue, 1240-1302. Giotto, 1267-1337. Albi Cathedral. Windsor Castle. Winchester College: William of Wykeham. Gothic, Decorated period. Arras tapestry. First oil paintings. Doge's Palace, Venice. The Italian Renaissance. Fra Angelico, 1387-1455. Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519. Caxton: first printed book 1477. Giorgione, 1478-1510. Aubusson tapestry.	Rise of Guelphs and Ghibellines. Failure and return of 5th Crusade. 'Sumer is icumen in'—famous 13th-century part-song. ?Aztecs enter Mexico.
	Roger Bacon, philosopher-scientist. Dante. The Troubadours. Edward I. Robert the Bruce. The Black Death. Crecy and Poitiers. The Black Prince. Beginning of the Hundred Years War. Rise of the Medici. Chaucer. Wiclif. Tamerlane (Timur.)
	Gutenberg discovers printing, 1436. Humanism. Zenith of Venetian power. Agincourt. Joan of Arc. Turks capture Constantinople. Wars of the Roses. Columbus. Machiavelli.

Appendix II

CHINA

<i>Date A.D.</i>	<i>Dynasty and Ruler</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>	<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>
1522 1567	Chia Ching Lung Ch'ing		Early blue and white porcelain. Enamels on porcelain. <i>Cloisonné</i> , best period. The Porce- lain Pagoda.
1573	Wan Li	Arrival of Jesuit Father Ricci in Peking, A.D. 1601.	The Ming tombs, and the palaces of Peking. Early carved lacquer. Modern type carpets.
1644	CH'ING Shun Chih	First English vessels at Canton, A.D. 1637. Manchu conquest and dynasty.	Kuan-yin now becomes a goddess. Delicacy and sophistica- tion. Zenith of tech- nical achievement in porcelain. <i>Famille verte</i> enamels. Painting and sculpture decadent and imitating the antique.
1662	K'ang Hsi	Era of modern history and Europeans in China. Expansion of empire Westward.	Zenith of technical achievement in carved lacquer, carpets, carved jade, and semi-precious stones.
1680		Researches, catalogues, encyclopaedias. Growth of trade: East India Company.	
1723	Yung Chêng	Roman Catholic Mis- sionaries expelled.	<i>Famille rose</i> enamels and painted porcelain.
1736	Ch'ien Lung	Era of conquest and ex- tension of empire. The Emperor, a great general, artist, and poet.	Peking architecture in imitation of ancient buildings. Emasculate design.
1792		Lord Macartney's em- bassy.	Over-elaborate decora- tion.
1796	Chia-Ch'ing	Secret Societies power- ful.	Good porcelain still made.
1800		Lord Amherst's em- bassy.	Great skill: no inspira- tion.
			DECLINE IN ART.

Appendix II

CONCURRENT WORLD EVENTS

<i>Principal Artists, Monuments, and Art Developments</i>	<i>Memorable Men and Events</i>
<p>Botticelli, 1444-1510. Dürer. Quentin Matsys. Holbein. Michelangelo. P. Breughel. François premier style. Bihzad. Majolica, best period. Titian. Benvenuto Cellini. Renaissance in England: transition from Tudor style. El Greco. Mani. Baroque art. Inigo Jones, architect. Persian Miniatures—zenith. The Taj-Mahal, India. Rubens. Velasquez. Van Dyck. Frans Hals. Nicholas Poussin. François Mansard. Destruction of English church figure sculpture by iconoclasts. Rembrandt. Jordaens. Claude Lor- rain. Great Mosque of Delhi. Korin, Japanese painter. Terborg. Le Nôtre. Sir Christopher Wren. Jean Tijou. St. Paul's. Hampton Court additions. Vermeer of Delft. Kenzan, Japanese artist. Dresden China. Palace of Versailles. Watteau. William Hogarth. Sèvres porcelain. Gobelins tapestries. Craze for <i>Chinoiserie</i>. Canaletto. F. Boucher. Sir William Chambers. Chippendale.</p> <p>Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Royal Academy. Canova. The Brothers Adam. Hokusai. Hiroshige. Corot. French 'Empire' style.</p> <p>DECLINE IN EUROPEAN ART.</p>	<p>Palestrina, composer. The Great Mogul Cortes and Pizarro. Henry VIII. Sir Thomas More. Torquemada and the Inquisition. Montaigne. Akbar, Grand Mogul. Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare. James I. The Gunpowder Plot. Francis Bacon. Charles I, 1625-49. Gustavus Adolphus. Galileo. Richelieu. Milton. The Thirty Years War, 1618-48. Cromwell, 1649-60. Purcell, composer. Charles II. Plague and Fire of Lon- don. Molière. Spinoza. Stradivarius. Louis XIV. James II. William and Mary. Newton. Leibnitz. Peter the Great. Queen Anne. Duke of Marlborough. Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>. George I. The South Sea Bubble. George II. 'Bonnie Prince Charlie.' Clive. Wolfe. Voltaire. George III. Mozart.</p> <p>America's Declaration of Indepen- dence. French Revolution. Beethoven. Goethe. Napoleon.</p>

APPENDIX III

THE BUDDHA LEGEND AS DEPICTED IN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

The date of the Buddha's birth is generally given as 557 B.C. during the lifetime of both the famous Chinese philosophers Lao-tzŭ and Confucius, and of the Grecian poetess Sappho. His father and mother were king and queen of the Sākya mountain tribe which inhabited a region at the foot of the Himalayas. Hence one of the Buddha's names—Sākya-muni. Other names given to the child were Siddhārtha Gāutama. Amida or Amitabha are much later names given to the Buddha as Ruler of the Western Paradise, while the name Maitreya announces the Messiah or Buddha that is to come.

Legend has no one version of all the events in his life, but the following chief episodes are the most generally accepted and depicted in art—representations of several events being often closely grouped together in one composition.

The Dream. The Bodhisattva, who is the unborn Buddha, descends from Heaven, and Queen Māyā dreams of him as a pure white elephant approaching. (Another version states that Queen Māyā is carried up to Heaven.)

Immaculate Conception. Queen Māyā's dream is interpreted by Brahmans as an immaculate Conception.

Nativity. As her confinement draws near Queen Māyā sets out for her parents' home, but she rests by the way in the Lumbini Grove, near Kapilavastu. There the child is born, being delivered from her side.

First Seven Steps. He immediately takes his First Seven Steps, and lifting his right arm declares that this will be his last earthly existence. Imprints of the sacred lotus flower appear in his footprints.

Bath. Adoration of the Naga Kings. At his first bath the many-headed serpent-Naga assist by letting fall a shower of water. There occurs the adoration of the Naga Kings.

Return of Mother and Child. Child brought to the Temple. Queen Māyā returns with the child to Kapilavastu. He is brought to the temple and the figures of the gods bow down before him.

Appendix III

The Prophet and the King. The ascetic Kāladevila prophesies that the child will become a Buddha and show mankind the way of salvation. But King Suddhōdana, the child's father, wishes him to be a Prince and shuts him away in luxurious palace buildings surrounded by parks and gardens and a lofty wall.

Pandits Confounded. At school his miraculous faculties amaze his masters.

Athletic Prowess of the Prince. In all games and contests he is acclaimed the victor. (His magical skill in archery is most frequently depicted.)

Marriage. At the age of sixteen the Prince marries Yaśodharā after their first meeting. A son, Rahula, is born to them.

The Four Dread Sights. At the age of twenty he escapes from his sheltered existence in the palace and for the first time sees old age, disease, poverty and death. (Some versions say there were four separate occasions on which he saw one of these dreadful sights.)

Renunciation and Departure. Meditating upon the causes of the endless chain of life, sorrow, death and rebirth, he resolves on renunciation and retirement into seclusion so that he can discover a way of salvation from these evils. At the age of twenty-nine, he leaves the palace by night, while his wife and child sleep.

Discarding of Robes and Jewels. On the bank of a river he cuts off his long hair, gives his jewels and his horse to his servant and dismisses him. Later he changes his fine robes for those of a beggar.

Asceticism. After unsuccessful attempts at purification and salvation by means of prayers and rites, he follows the Brahmans' teaching of salvation by mortification, and with five Mendicants practises asceticism for six years.

Abandonment of Asceticism. Fainting after fasting convinces him of error and he resolves to abandon asceticism and is deserted by the Mendicants.

Offer of Food by Sujata. Seeing his condition, a young girl, Sujata, offers him food. He bathes in the Nairañjarā river.

The Bodhi-Tree. Refreshed and strengthened he makes his way that evening towards a large tree, when a grass-cutter offers him a bundle of grass as a seat.

Enlightenment. While seated under the *Bodhi*-Tree he attains complete enlightenment and Buddhahood.

Appendix III

Temptation by the Evil One. Mārā, the Evil One, with his followers, attacks the Buddha, but he successfully resists, calling on the Earth goddess to witness.

First Sermon. Later the Buddha falls in with the same five Mendicants who had before deserted him. They are astounded by his power and majesty and, in the Deer Park near Benares, he preaches to them his first sermon on the Law.

A Forced Ordination. He returns to his home, Kapilavastu, and forces Nanda against his will to become a monk.

First Monastery. A site near Srāvastī and a building for the first monastery are presented to the Buddha. On its completion he dedicates it.

Monkey's Offering. A monkey makes an offering to the Buddha, who accepts it, to the great delight of the monkey.

Taming the Elephant. A mad elephant encountered in the street is subdued and does obeisance to the Buddha.

Heretics Confounded. A concourse of heretics calls upon the Buddha for a miracle as proof of his right to his title. He performs one and confounds them.

Ascent into Heaven. He ascends into Heaven to visit his mother, Queen Māyā. Later he descends by a triple ladder which appears and leads down to the earth.

Attempts on his Life. Devadatta, out of jealousy, makes several unsuccessful attempts to kill the Buddha.

His Death. At a great age, the Buddha reclines on his side beneath a vast, spreading tree and enters *Parinirvāṇa*¹ (death) while all the living creatures mourn at his couch. Later the Partition of the Relics takes place.

THE PRINCIPAL GESTURES OF THE HANDS EXHIBITED BY BUDDHIST IMAGES

1. 'Protection'. One hand (usually the right) is raised to about shoulder level with palm facing outward and fingers touching each other and vertical. This gesture is also often shown in one of the hands of the earlier Indian many-armed images which are occasionally found in Chinese art.

¹*Parinirvāṇa* is death of the physical body. *Nirvāṇa* is complete enlightenment and freedom from earthly desire (not oblivion). It is sometimes attained during life, as in the case of the Buddha.

Appendix III

2. 'Charity'. The open hand, palm outward, is lowered, as if in the act of giving. This gesture also appears in earlier Indian art.

3. 'Teaching'. A position of the hands, raised together to a little below the level of the chin, the name for which is 'Turning the Wheel of the Law'. One hand is in front and facing the other, and each hand has its thumb and first finger joined, and touching the other thumb and finger.

4. 'Meditation'. The hands, with fingers extended, lie palms upward one upon the other in the lap of the seated figure.

5. 'Discourse'. The hand is slightly raised and the first or second or third finger touches the tip of the thumb, forming a rough circle.

6. 'Witness'. This gesture represents Buddha calling on the Earth goddess to witness his resistance of the attack of the God of Evil. The right hand is lowered over the right knee, with palm turned inward and fingers pointing down towards the earth.

7. 'Adoration' or 'Salutation'. The hands are raised with palms and fingers touching and pointing upwards at the level of the chin as if in the attitude of prayer. In another form this gesture exhibits arms raised higher with the palms turned upwards. (Not found in figures of the Buddha but of his attendants.)

In addition to the above there are less common gestures. There are also the various postures (largely sitting or squatting). For these the reader is referred especially to the following of the many books which give fuller information on Buddhism, and, in many cases, illustrations:

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